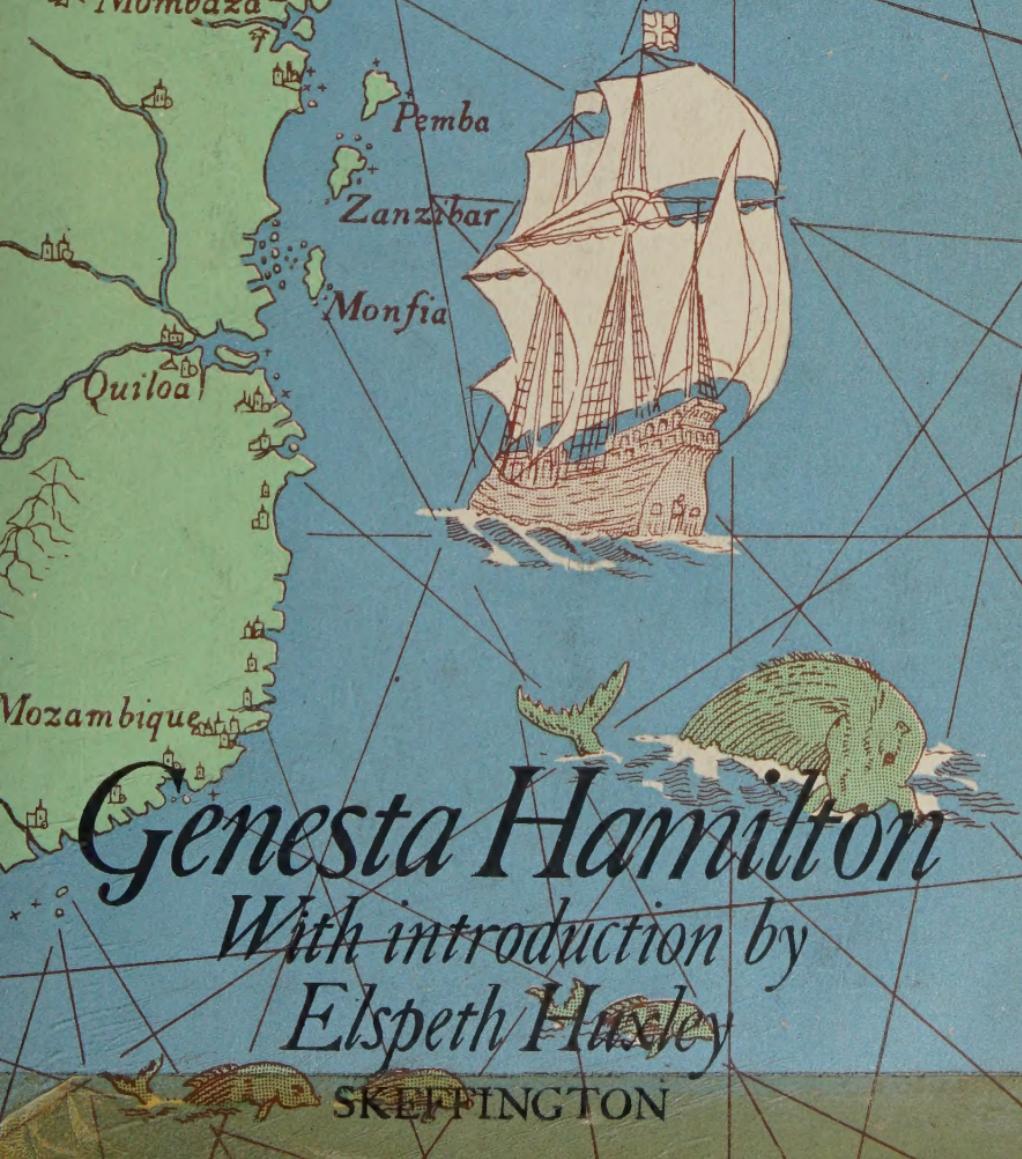


AFRICA

In the Wake of da Gama



Genesta Hamilton
With introduction by
Elspeth Huxley

SKEFFINGTON

IN THE WAKE OF DA GAMA

GENESTA HAMILTON

(*Lady Claud Hamilton*)

with an Introduction

by

Elspeth Huxley

Genesta Hamilton here writes clearly, simply, and delightfully about the coast she knows so well.

In these absorbingly interesting pages, always vivid, never verbose, she has traced for her readers the history of Portugal's attempts, both successful and unsuccessful, to colonize the East Coast of Africa. It gives a clear picture of the rise and fall of Portuguese power along the East Coast of Africa, starting with Vasco da Gama's first voyage along the littoral, and the subsequent alliances, friendships and enmities; campaigns and massacres during their efforts to ensure the safety and security of their ships voyaging to India.

As this book is laid aside, the reader will doubtless realize that for the bones of those many warriors scattered all along that ancient Azanian Coast the story serves as a sympathetic, an enduring, epitaph:

*"Yea, it is very sweet
and decorous
The omnipotent Shade to meet
And flatter thus."*

"The tale of the Portuguese invasion has been told before, but never, so far as I know, in such a popular and accessible form as that here presented by Lady Claud Hamilton, who has the advantage of writing with a first-hand knowledge of, and lively interest, in the terrain."

ELSPETH HUXLEY

15/-

net



78
HRS



IN THE WAKE OF DA GAMA



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025

https://archive.org/details/bwb_KU-611-165



IN THE WAKE OF DA GAMA

THE STORY OF PORTUGUESE PIONEERS
IN EAST AFRICA 1497-1729

by

GENESTA HAMILTON

With an introduction by

ELSPETH HUXLEY

1951

SKEFFINGTON AND SON LIMITED
FOUNDED 1858
11, Stratford Place, W.1
London New York Melbourne Sydney Cape Town

Made and Printed in Great Britain by
GREYCAINES
(*Taylor Garnett Evans & Co. Ltd.*)
Watford, Herts.

IN writing this short history, I found in the old records so many contradictory descriptions of various incidents, that I was able to use those versions which most appealed to me.

I therefore apologize beforehand to anyone who may feel moved to point out that, for instance, King Manuel did not watch da Gama's fleet sail out of sight, that it was not the Berrio which was burned at Kilimani, and that I have made several other mistakes.

I offer my deepest thanks to Major Boxer of London University, to Mrs. Keble-White of Kenya, to Sir John Gray of Zanzibar, to Mrs. Dodson for her research work, to Mr. Geoffrey Cardew, whose enchanting dust-cover is based on a map of Linschoten's, to Mr. Fergus Wilson for his splendid photographs and to all those other kind people who helped me to collect the material for this book.

CONTENTS

<i>Chapter</i>		<i>Page</i>
I	1497	13
II	1497-1498	23
III	1498-1519	34
IV	1504-1507	48
V	1508-1562	60
VI	The Tragic History of the Sea, 1552	75
VII	1552	83
VIII	1580-1615	93
IX	1615-1630	107
X	1630-1631	116
XI	1631-1635	127
XII	1635-1668	139
XIII	1668-1698	151
XIV	1699-1729	162
	Bibliography	170
	Index	173

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

An early seventeenth-century engraving of Vasco da Gama	<i>facing page</i>	16
A sixteenth-century engraving from Linschoten's <i>Itinerario</i> depicting a Portuguese lady in her carrying chair	" " 17	
A sixteenth-century engraving from Linschoten's <i>Itinerario</i> depicting one of the Arab Seamen whom the Portuguese used to employ to navigate their ships, and group of Ethiopians	" " 32	
An early sixteenth-century engraving of Linschoten's drawing of the Market at Goa	" " 33	
A Sailing Ship of the fourteenth century called <i>Redunda</i>	<i>following</i> "	40
The Caravel <i>Flor de la Mar</i> , lost after the conquest of Malaca in 1511; the Caravel <i>Trinidade</i> , 1511	" " 40	
A Portuguese Brigantine of the fifteenth century	" " 40	
A Royal Portuguese Galley, end of sixteenth century	" " 40	
An early seventeenth-century engraving of Muscate Sailing at Sunset	<i>facing</i> "	64
A Coastal Dhow entering the old harbour of Mombasa	" " 65	
An early sixteenth-century engraving of Linschoten's depicting ships used by Portuguese for fighting and carrying merchandise	" " 81	
A Portuguese Sailing Ship called <i>Industõe</i>	" " 112	
The Mainsail Fills	" " 113	
Fishing Canoes in Zanzibar	" " 128	
Through a Zanzibar Doorway	" " 129	
A Dhow from Muscat	<i>following</i> "	152
A Two-masted Dhow	" " 152	
Arabian Dhows in Zanzibar	" " 152	
The Carved Stern of an Arabian Dhow	" " 152	
Bull Fighting in Pemba	" " 168	
An Arab Sailor of Slave descent	" " 168	
A Muscat Arab Sailor	" " 168	

ERRATUM

The reproduced drawings by the late Portuguese naval archaeologist, Admiral Jôao Brás de Oliveira, decorating the end papers and pages forty one to forty four, are by kind permission of Maria Germana Couvreur Brás de Oliveira, his daughter, and not by The Biblioteca E Museu de Marinha Lisbon.

INTRODUCTION

WE in Britain are apt to assume that England is at once pioneer and leader among colonial Powers in Africa. But whereas no present dependency of ours is as yet a hundred years old,¹ the Portuguese have ruled their colony of Mozambique without interruption for some four hundred and fifty years, and may very likely still be doing so when the Union Jack has given way to a national standard above the last Government House.

But Mozambique is only the southern remnant of an empire which stretched northwards almost to the horn of Africa, and embraced the whole fertile and populous East African littoral. It lasted for over two hundred years. It was a maritime empire; its lines of communication were oceanic; mainly urban in character, its protagonists made no attempt to dominate or even to explore the huge hinterland extending to the Great Lakes of Central Africa. This omission became a weakness, for the trade in ivory and slaves remained, as it had begun, in Arab hands, and never grew to a volume large enough to make this section of the empire profitable. And so East Africa remained a drain on the mother country, a poor relation of the more splendid settlements in India, to whom, indeed, the Portuguese commanders often had resort when Arab intrigues and revolts grew menacing.

The Arabs, who for perhaps seven hundred years before the Portuguese arrival had colonized this coast, kept up a sporadic and unorganized resistance movement for more than two centuries. In the end, and after the power of Portugal itself had waned, they drove the Portuguese away and resumed control of their narrow empire until the second European advent, that of the British, at the end of the last century. It may seem strange to readers of this book that a people so fierce, proud and intransigent should have crumpled so quickly before the advance of these later invaders, and with such finality. The main part of the answer perhaps lies in the fact that the British, by destroying

¹ Excluding temporary settlements, such as the West Coast "factories" set up as depots for the slave trade, and the foundation of Freetown in 1787 as a colony for freed slaves.

the slave trade (and this was the principal object of their incursion), destroyed also the basis of Arab economy, and thus rendered them unable to resist. Another reason doubtless was that, owing to advances in technology, the British were able to open up the hinterland and thus bring into existence great new forces—the forces of African Africa—which weighted down the balance of the old.

The tale of the Portuguese invasion has been told before, but never, so far as I know, in such a popular and accessible form as that here presented by Lady Claud Hamilton, who has the advantage of writing with a first-hand knowledge of, and lively interest in, the terrain. Readers already familiar with the main events may yet find incidents new to them—as, for instance, the tragic story of the wreck of the *San Joao* off the coast of Natal in 1554, and the adventures of her survivors; and the growing interest of East Africans of all races in their own history will no doubt be pricked and stimulated by this convenient summary of a bloody, violent and courageous story. Indeed, there are no doubt lessons in it for us all today. The tragedy of Yussuf, that young Arab prince turned Portuguese, provides a classic illustration of the explosive tensions which may be set up within the human mind by the deliberate mixing of two widely divergent cultures and faiths.

North of Mozambique, little now remains of more than two centuries of Portuguese rule, save the thick-walled forts, a European strain in the mixed blood of the Swahili people and a few words implanted in their tongue. Africa has a vast capacity to erase from its surface, rather than absorb into its heart, the antic motions of invading peoples and ideas. The shattered visage and trunkless legs of stone of Ozymandias may indeed stand for a symbol:

‘My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings:
Look on my works, ye mighty, and despair!’
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

It is a salutary but by no means a despairing thought that Africa will deal in her own way with the divers works on which we

ourselves set most store. Meanwhile, records of the hopes, the achievements and the tragedies of those who have preceded us are so meagre that all which has been put on paper is doubly deserving of study; and those who seek an introduction to a section of it which is told in detail in the original documents, and in Professor Coupland's two standard volumes, cannot do better than to consult Lady Claud Hamilton's book.

ELSPETH HUXLEY.

CHAPTER ONE

1497

I

IT was 25 July, 1497.

Through the main street of Lisbon a colourful procession wound its way towards the Cathedral. First came a sea-captain's standard, and then the captains themselves. King Manuel I and his Queen walked behind them, followed by a bright train of nobles and merchants, sailors and soldiers, priests and criminals. The Sovereigns and their courtiers were going to pray for the others who, for the glory of God and the honour of Portugal, were voluntarily setting forth on a long, dangerous voyage into unknown seas.

Crowds thronged to see them pass. Ladies with flowers in their hair and mantillas flowing down their backs, leant from the balconies, made gay for the day with rugs and silk shawls, which hung over the railings. They waved and laughed, some of them wept a little. Strapping fisherwomen stood in the streets wearing black pork-pie hats over bright kerchiefs, shawls crossed on their bosoms, and many different coloured skirts, which swirled around them when they moved. There were farmers, shepherds and bull-herds from the country, clad in warm, picturesque trousers made of cow-skins, with the hair outside. Many girls wore the lovely dress of the Portuguese water-front—a thick wool skirt of bright colours, an apron and a waistcoat, a tiny cap and a purse which hung from the belt; all sparkling with sequins and embroidered in patterns and flowers of contrasting wools. The dark, beautiful gipsies stood apart, their silk and cotton shawls, and their vivid skirts making patches of colour as bright as the flowers they carried for sale, in wicker baskets on their heads.

The man walking directly behind the standard looked neither to right nor left, but stared straight before him with a rapt expression on his strong and ruddy face. Vasco da Gama was destined to become one of the world's greatest figures, a

master of the sea and of men, an Empire builder on the grand scale, a fighter of ruthless courage, a pioneer of titanic conceptions.

Over a hundred years before this moment, when da Gama led his Sovereign towards the church where the greatest enterprise of the century was to be blessed, there was born the prince who became da Gama's inspiration, whose memory he worshipped all his life. He was the Infante Dom Henry, known as the Navigator. His parents were King John I of Portugal, and Philippa, daughter of John of Gaunt of England; and he was their third surviving son.

When only twenty-one Prince Henry had fought with such valour at the siege of Ceuta—"the African Gibraltar"—that he was granted a knighthood, the dukedom of Viseu and the lordship of Covilham. Though a proved and clever soldier, all his interest was centred on the sea, and in 1415, he sent forth his first ship of discovery, captained by one John de Trasto. De Trasto reached the Canaries, but this was no great feat, as the whole archipelago had been known for some time to both French and Spanish sailors. Soon, however, more and more Portuguese captains went exploring—some south down the mysterious shores of Africa, some west towards the sunset.

The knowledge of new lands and seas, rocks and currents, to say nothing of monsters and spirits of the deep, grew fast under the inspiring and enthusiastic guidance of Prince Henry.

In 1419 Prince Henry was made Governor of Algarve, a desolate stretch of land in the south of Portugal. Here at the town of Sagres, he established a naval arsenal and school of navigation. Around him gathered a company of scientists, cartographers, mathematicians, astronomers and makers of nautical instruments. Fleets of caravels were built—strong little vessels, seventy-five feet long and twenty feet wide, rigged with three masts and triangular sails. Fired by their Prince's faith and encouraged by his patience and understanding in the face of failures, companies of adventurers set sail again and again through the unknown seas. They braved currents and gales, hidden reefs and unchartered shoals; as well as even more appalling terrors, which no one could actually prove he had seen, though every mariner knew they existed.

There were sea-serpents of terrifying length whose tails could sink a ship, vast octupuses whose tentacles could seize and crush a vessel, dragging her down with all on board; and birds whose wings were so huge that they darkened the sky and raised storms in their wake.

Sometimes the captains of these lonely little ships lost heart and returned to Prince Henry with only a handful of strange vegetation as proof of their voyages. On these occasions the Prince said nothing, of either praise or blame, but waited until they were rested. Then he sent them out again, saying he expected them to return with maps and charts of their journeys and tangible proof of where they had been, in the shape of natives caught ashore. These natives were in great demand in Portugal, where they were auctioned in the slave markets. A contemporary chronicler records that he was moved to tears at the misery of these poor creatures, as husbands, wives and children were separated, and sold apart from each other. Nevertheless, he comforted himself by reflecting that the godless heathens would now enter Christian families and receive the ineffable advantages of being instructed in the Christian faith.

Henry greatly desired to find the fabulous Christian ruler called Prester John, who had been sought by western princes ever since the twelfth century. But the Prince died before this wish could be fulfilled.

The farthest south reached by his captains during the lifetime of Henry the Navigator was the coast of Gambia. To those dark and hidden regions the Prince sent a party of missionaries in 1458. Prince Henry died on 13 November, 1460. He had earned for himself a high place in history. He was brave and patient, but he was also utterly determined to succeed in his personal ambitions, at no matter what cost to others. He believed in his men, thereby calling forth all that was best in them. After his death his memory was an inspiration to future generations of Portuguese adventurers, who, in his name and under his flag, sailed their little ships all the way down the coast of Africa, round the Cape—then up the east coast with the dawn ever on their right hand; and thence straight east, straight into the sunrise, till they touched the shores of India.

II

Although the date of Vasco da Gama's birth is not known for certain, it cannot have been long after the death of Henry the Navigator. His father, Estevan da Gama, was Comptroller of the Household of Alfonso V. Vasco grew up with his head full of stories of adventurous journeys, of strange vegetation, monstrous animals, both ashore and at sea; and mysterious lands which beckoned him to unfold their mysteries.

Vasco's family claimed descent from a knight who had fought under Giraldo the Fearless, the conqueror of Evora, near Lisbon, in 1166. Another ancestor was Alvaro Annes da Gama, who helped Alfonso III to drive the Moors from Portugal. His mother was Doña Isabel Sodre, of a "high and courtly family" whose members also had a thirst for adventure. Vasco's birthplace was Sines, a small town facing the Atlantic, and bounded to landward by bare and desolate plains. Even now, those who visit Sines may see a little building beside the ruined castle, which is said to stand on the site of the da Gama's home.

Estevan and Isabel had five children: Paulo, Ayres, Vasco, Estevan and Theresa. Vasco from the first was the leader; he was brave, ambitious, and of a violent temper. He was also deeply devoted to his gentle brother, Paulo.

The short, strongly built little boy spent a large part of his days at sea with the fishermen, learning from them of weather and winds, the signs of approaching storms, and how to sail their small clumsy boats. As he grew older he became restless at home, and at last was allowed to go and join the forces fighting in Castille. There he showed his mettle, and the King took notice of him. He might have done well for himself at court, or in the army, but his heart was with ships. He worshipped at the shrine of Prince Henry.

He was determined some day—somehow—to sail farther than anyone else, to see new lands and wonders hitherto undreamed of, to be an admiral, the greatest explorer of them all, and one whose name would ring down the ages.

This dream came true.



Dom Vasco da Gama

- 6 -

By Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum

An early seventeenth-century engraving of Vasco da Gama.



Linschoten's Verwoerd. In de Portugese Vloot. In
compte gespanne.

C. 1580. En de Portugese Vloot. In de Portugese
betrek in gedragten worden.

1580.

By Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum

A sixteenth-century engraving from Linschoten's Itinerario depicting a Portuguese lady in her carrying chair.

III

For some years the King and his advisers had been casting about in their minds for a means to seize the rich trade of Venice and the East. What they needed was a sea route to India. Vasco da Gama, because of his enterprise and courage, was selected for the honour of the exploratory journey. It was in 1497 that he set forth from Lisbon on his first and greatest voyage. His fleet consisted of four small ships. The *Sao Gabriel*, 120 tons, was his flag-ship, her other officers being Pero de'Alenquer, pilot, Goncalo Alvarez, Master, and Diego Dias, clerk. The *Sao Raphael*, 110 tons, had Paulo da Gama for captain, with Joao de Coimbra, pilot, and Joño de Sa, clerk. The *Berrio* was a small caravel; Nicolau Coelho was her captain, Pero Escolar, pilot, Alvaro de Braga, clerk. There was a store-ship, *Sao Maria*, with Goncalo Nunes for captain. The *Berrio* was of only 50 tons, she was a fast lateen-rigged vessel of the type made famous by the sailors of Portugal from the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries. She was named after her former owner and pilot, Fernando Rodrigues Berrio. These small, hardy ships had two, and sometimes three, masts. They were very seaworthy, as indeed they had to be, to weather the storms which raged round the southern tip of Africa, and the monsoons which tore at the waters of the Indian Ocean until they were lifted into white-topped, churning, liquid mountain ranges.

The store-ship, upon which so much depended, was larger; according to Castanteda her displacement was 200 tons. She was bought from Ayes Correa, a famous shipowner of Lisbon; but the *Sao Raphael* and the *Sao Gabriel* were specially built for the voyage. The building operations were supervised by Batholomew Dias, that great veteran of the seas, who was the first person to sail round the Cape. He had named it the Cape of Torments because of the storms which nearly caused the total loss of his ships and men; but later the name was changed to the Cape of Good Hope.

Dias's journey took place in 1488, and, remembering the tempests to be encountered, he advised against taking ships of the small caravel type, in which he himself had sailed, and recommended instead square-rigged ships, larger and heavier,

safer and more comfortable, even if they were slower and less easy to put about. These carefully-planned vessels had a fairly shallow draught, since they would be expected to sail in shallow waters. Their timbers were cut in 1495 during the last year of the reign of King John II—he who was so beloved by his subjects that they named him “the Great and the Perfect”. Carefully chosen trees in the Royal woods of Leiria and Alcacer were felled and seasoned to provide planks for the decks and hulls. The ships were flat-bottomed, with square stern and bluff bow. Each ship bore aloft the figure of her patron saint to bless and guard her.

Fore and aft great castles rose, a deep waist between them. These were used for fighting—in them the crews would make a last stand if their ships were boarded. In later centuries the castles grew to unwieldy heights, and often during heavy weather it happened that the forecastle, and even the one aft, had to be cut away, in order to save the ship. Nothing is left of these sea-going citadels but the name, *fo’c’sle*, now denoting the fore part of the vessel usually used as crews’ quarters.

A long-boat or *batel* was carried amidships; and a barge with four or six oars. The two forward sails were square; the mizzen was triangular. When all the sails were spread they presented an area of about 4,000 square feet of canvas to the wind. There was a crow’s nest on the fore-mast and another on the main mast. From these two eyries men could hurl javelins, grenades, and powder-pots down on the enemy. High above the hull rose the main mast, proudly bearing the Royal Standard at its head, from the crow’s nest floated the Captain’s scarlet flag, and on every sail the Cross of the Order of Christ glowed in bright colours.

The ships carried a large number of presents and trade goods; most of which, though suitable to the wild Africans of the Guinea Coast, were not so appropriate for rich Indian princes and merchants. The gifts included lengths of striped cotton, sugar, honey, olive-oil, wash basins, scarlet hoods, jackets and pantaloons, hats and caps, glass beads, little bells, rings and bracelets made of tin—with which the naïve and unimaginative Portuguese hoped to impress the jewel-hung, silk-clad Indians.

Provisions for the long journey were carefully thought out,

with a view to a three-year voyage. The daily rations were plentiful. They consisted of $1\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of biscuits, 1lb. of beef or $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. pork, $2\frac{1}{2}$ pints of water, $1\frac{1}{2}$ pints of wine, some vinegar and oil. Fast days, of course, must be kept, and on these rice, codfish and cheese were eaten instead of meat. There were also good supplies of flour, lentils, sardines, plums, almonds, onions, garlic, mustard, salt, sugar and honey.

The ships were well armed, but the men, perhaps for fear of mutiny, were not. They had no firearms. They carried cross-bars, spears, axes, swords, javelins and pikes, and they wore stout leather jerkins and breast-plates, though the officers had steel armour.

The fleet's scientific outfit was the best procurable, though primitive enough considering the thousands of miles of uncharted seas they had to cross. There were books and maps, including a copy of Ptolemy's works, and all the information about the East which had been collected at Lisbon during the past years. There were reports sent home by the famous overland traveller to India, Pedro de Covilhao, and there was information provided by an Abyssinian priest, Lucas Marco, who had travelled all the way to Lisbon from his distant, savage country in 1490. The Jewish astronomer, Zacut, provided da Gama with his most modern instruments, and gave him a course in astronomical navigation. There were wooden and metal astrolabes. There was also a copy, all in Latin, of Zacut's famous work for which he could find no shorter title than *Almenach perpetuum celestium motuum cuius radix est 1473*. There were compasses, sounding leads, and hour-glasses. And then there were the heavy but precious stone pillars called Padraos, which, at the King's wish, were dedicated to the saints whose names the ships bore, Gabriel, Raphael and Sao Maria, to remind them to protect their namesakes.

The ships' crews were carefully chosen. They included a number of convicts and prisoners called Degradados, the Degraded ones, who were given this chance of working their way back to freedom and even prosperity. They were taken for the specific task of "adventuring on land in dangerous places", to collect information and supplies. They were not all a success, for Correa, the chronicler, perpetually reports them as having been left behind in various places.

One, Pedro Dias, nicknamed the "Northeasterling"—perhaps on account of a bleak temper?—was left at Mozambique, but eventually found his way to India. Pero Esteves was deposited at Ouiloa; Joao Machado, on the other hand, had an adventurous and successful career under the flag of the Captain-Major.

A very different man was Damiao Rodriguez. As often happens with people of opposing characters, he was a great friend of Machado's. But he had no heart for the adventures and dangers of a hard voyage, and later he deserted his ship, the *Sao Gabriel*. When Cabral came to Mozambique, so Correa says, he saw his grave.

There was also a "new Christian": in other words a converted Jew, named Joao Nunez, who was useful as an interpreter, since he knew some Arabic besides his native Hebrew. He was lucky enough, or clever enough, to stay with the fleet all the way to Calicut.

Besides these picturesque characters, and the sailors and soldiers who accompanied the fleet, there were pilots, interpreters, priests, and at least one historian. Diego Dias was a brother of the great Bartholomew. He was a good seaman and of reliable character. One of the priests, Pedro de Covilha, was Prior of the Monastery at Lisbon, and sailed with da Gama as Chaplain of the Fleet and Father Confessor.

The death-roll was heavy. Of all those men, numbering between 120 and 150, who left Lisbon on that voyage, less than 60 returned alive, and many of these were crippled or ruined in health. As da Gama collected his crews, he instructed each man to study well his trade, of carpenter, rope-maker, caulker, blacksmith, or plank-maker, until such time as they should be ready to sail. He also increased their pay and bought them the tools and equipment necessary for their work.

At last all was ready. The men had their clothes, their arms and provisions. Trade-goods were stowed away below decks. Ammunition and spare firearms lay in their appointed places, the instruments were cleaned and polished.

The beautiful vessels, glowing with bright colours, moved gently up and down on the broad, blue bosom of the Tagus. Keyed to the highest pitch of emotion, da Gama and his company of adventurers walked to the Cathedral to be blessed.

Bishop Calcadhilho officiated. The beautiful, spiritual cere-

mony, the soft light of candles suffusing the church's dim interior, the scent from the banks of massed flowers and from the incense burners swung by solemn little boys, brought tears to the eyes of some of these tough men, who knew that this might be the last time they would ever worship here.

The Bishop prayed for them and pronounced the Blessing. Da Gama stood before his King, receiving from his hands the consecrated Royal Standard, now entrusted to his care. As the last lovely notes from the choir floated above them, the Captain-Major and his men walked slowly down the aisle and out into the blazing Lisbon sunshine.

Da Gama stood on the steps outside the Cathedral, the Standard in his hands, his Sovereigns beside him, his men behind him. Wild with excitement, the waiting crowds roared their welcome and pride; they surged towards him, knelt before the group on the steps, tossing flowers at their feet. Da Gama could not speak, but stood in silence, smiling strainedly.

After a while the procession re-formed and moved towards the Royal Palace. The adventurers felt their hearts exalted and at the same time weakened, as they walked between the dense crowds of gay people, looked at the houses with their façades of coloured tiles and their climbing plants and shady gardens, saw lovely Lisbon straying over her hills; and thought —when would they see all this again? Would they ever return?

At the Palace, the King said the first of his farewells. Then da Gama mounted, and, still escorted by the gentlemen and nobles of the Court, rode down to the wharf. The courtiers clustered round him, embracing him and his officers, calling out their good wishes and hopes of success. Vasco and his company embarked, Paulo carrying the standard.

Fishing people crowded on the wharf, the women kissed their hands and waved their gay kerchiefs, the men blessed them and wished them luck. No one loved and admired da Gama more than these seafaring folk. No one understood more clearly than they the dangers their high-hearted countrymen were going to face. They stood or knelt on the shore, praying fervently for the safety of the Captain-Major, his men and his ships.

As they watched, the sails in the four ships came slowly up the masts. The Royal Standard and the Captain's scarlet flag broke out. Gleaming and glowing with polished cannons and

fresh paint, as gay as flower-beds with their flags and pennants, and the crosses on their sails, the ships moved off in line ahead, down the Tagus towards the mouth of the river. At Belem they dropped anchor opposite the great monastery and cathedral. King Manuel rejoined them here. He wished to stay with these adventurers of his until the last possible moment. A muster was taken of all who were going to sail, and at the King's command the name of every man in each ship was written down, and the names of their wives and parents and their birthplaces. The King gave orders that this book should be preserved in the House of Mines, so that payments might be made to the wives and families of those at sea.

For three more days da Gama and his men came continually ashore, confessing, communicating and praying, seeking all the strength and comfort they could get from their Church's rich resources.

Then the wind changed, ruffling the sea and stippling its dark blue surface with little white wave-tops. The square sails filled and bellied, the ships pulled on their anchors, as though eager to be away. Their crews stood against the sides, a brave sight in steel helmets and leather jerkins with their weapons glinting in the sun. On the poops stood the officers, coloured cloaks flowing back from their armour, plumes fluttering from their hats.

Over the blue Atlantic moved the four vessels, so small yet so stately, gathering speed as they went, so that their wakes shone white behind them. A great roar of cheers arose from the throats of all those gallant men, as they sailed past the King in his painted boat, rowed by men in scarlet and gold uniforms.

He followed them a short way. Then his boat stopped, the rowers resting on their oars. They watched for a long time, until one by one da Gama's ships disappeared in the distance.

CHAPTER TWO

1497-1498

I

FOR five months the ships sailed southward, touching at various ports previously visited and charted by Henry the Navigator's pioneers.

The journey had many pleasant interludes with occasional troublesome moments, of which one of the worst was at St. Helena Bay. A soldier, Fernando Velloso, who was a great braggart, conspicuous even among that company of far from modest men, was given permission to visit a "Caffre" village, and swaggered forth, armed cap-à-pie. In no time Velloso had succeeded in either offending or frightening the villagers, and his comrades on board beheld the satisfying spectacle of Velloso in full flight down a hillside, chased by a mob of furious, yelling blacks. The Portuguese rushed ashore to save him, and even in that trying moment one of them could not refrain from shouting, "It's easier running downhill than climbing up!" And the fugitive, breathless and scared as he was, still managed to call back, "When these black dogs began to crowd me I remembered you and hurried back to protect you."

Most of the natives halted when they saw the Portuguese, but a few came on, and there was a sharp fight. Someone threw a fish-spear at da Gama, and hit him, but no serious harm was done.

Soon after this the ships stood out to sea.

A month later they made a land-fall at the Bay of Blasius or Sao Bras. Here da Gama went ashore with a well-armed party, but the "negroes with frizzled hair" gave no trouble at all. On the contrary, they were friendly and ready to fraternize. For thirteen days the ships stayed in port, while the sails were dried and food and water taken on board. The Portuguese and natives entertained each other with singing and dancing, each in their own style. Even the Captain-Major joined in.

In September they were at sea again, and soon had to face

the dangerous passage round the Cape. But the weather held, and it was only later, as they sailed up the East Coast of Africa, that they ran into trouble.

Early in December they met a great storm. For ten days violent gales assaulted them, while mountainous seas ran down on the small ships, each one apparently about to engulf them. But the well-built vessels lifted themselves out of the way of the towering waves as they rolled towards them. Shuddering and groaning, they climbed the moving walls of water, perched quivering on the top for a moment, then slid down the other side to hit the trough with a sickening thud, only to start again the painful journey up the side of the next wave. The crews were exhausted and terrified and soaked. They worked and prayed as never in their lives before, and da Gama worked with them, carrying all their fears in his own heart, and the responsibility for the precious ships and all those lives, on his shoulders.

The storm raged on, buffeting ships and men; just before Christmas it blew itself out. Then, when the weary crews had recovered their strength, they turned against their Captain-major and clamoured to go home. The officers, too, had had more than enough. When da Gama would not agree with them, they conspired to capture the ships and sail back to Lisbon. But their commander was quite aware of what was going on, and he was not the man to give way to intimidation or to be made a fool of.

He called the men together and told them that if they ran into any more bad weather, he would put back for Portugal. But having been commissioned by the King to seek the route to India, he felt it only fair to himself to ask some of his officers to sign a paper giving the reasons for the failure to complete their mission. All agreed, and the pilot, master, and three leading seamen were invited into his cabin to sign the statement. Da Gama politely let them go in before him, then gently closed and locked the door, while some trusted sailors seized the five mutineers, and chained them up.

Men of this calibre master the minds of others, and da Gama had no more trouble amongst his people. He kept the mutineers in irons for several days, until they reached a river called by his travelling chronicler, alternatively Mercy, Cobre

or Reis. There they were realeased, but their troubles were not over. When what was left of the ships and men finally returned to Lisbon, and the survivors were presented to the King, the miserable mutineers had to make their appearance in chains.

II

On 25 December they sighted land to port. They named it Natal, for the day of the Nativity. They entered the river called Reis and settled down for a while to careen the ships and rest themselves; to drink clean water and eat fresh food, and to gather their strength for the next part of the journey.

In January 1498 they set forth once more, standing far to the east, passed the ancient Arab port of Sofala, and finally reached the harbour of Kilimani.

Now the wild, black, almost naked natives, with their easy laughter and primitive arms, to whom the Portuguese had become accustomed, were left behind; for the white men were approaching the fringes of Arab civilization. At Kilimani there were tall stone houses with massive, spike-studded doors; and finely-carved lattice windows, guarding the women's quarters. Persian mosques with pointed arches and slender pillars reached up towards the tossing crowns of palm trees.

There were narrow streets and little shops selling spices, chillies, beaten brass work, curved daggers and swords; silks and turbans and silver jewellery. The inhabitants were of mixed blood, for here the early Persians and their successors, the Arabs, had interbred with the native Bantu, so that people of many different types and colours wandered through the winding streets, and clustered along the water-front in endlessly chattering groups.

They welcomed the travellers, gave feasts for them, traded with them, explored their ships, took them ashore to their villages, danced for them, and did all they could to show their hospitality. Though Kilimani was only an outpost of the Arab Empire, and was seldom visited by the big ocean-going dhows which sailed regularly from Muscat south to Zanzibar and Calicut, there were men there who had come from the north,

and had seen ships as big as, if not bigger than, those of da Gama. This delighted the Portuguese, who felt that they were approaching their destination at last, and they called the place Rio de Bons Signeas: or the River of Good Omen. They were very happy here, among these friendly, generous people.

Then suddenly scurvy broke out. This terrible disease was new to sailors in those days, since long spells at sea, living on salt meat and cooking in salt water with no fresh vegetables to give them the necessary vitamins, were the exception rather than the rule. The Portuguese suffered terribly. Paulo da Gama, whose heart was tender as well as brave, did all he could to help his sailors, and distributed among them medicines which he had brought for his own private use. But in the thirty-two days during which they were at Kilimani, thirty men died. With such a shortage of crew it seemed wise to abandon one of the ships. Accordingly, the little *Berrio*, only fifty tons and a veteran of other punishing journeys, was broken up—to the great grief of her captain.

Perhaps to mark their first contact with civilization, da Gama here set up the pillar dedicated to Sao Gabriel, which had been carried in his flagship of the same name. And then the three remaining ships, with their surviving crews, set sail once more, journeying north up the fascinating coast of Eastern Africa.

III

One day they overhauled a sambuk, a small native craft, whose crew, intrigued by these strange, square-sailed vessels, allowed themselves to be stopped. Da Gama managed to entice one of the natives on board: a man named Davana. He was an intelligent and adventurous person, apparently a merchant, and he readily agreed to accompany the Captain-Major on his journey, interpret for him and help him in trading matters.

It was in March that they sighted the large and flourishing town of Mozambique, and dropped anchor in the roadstead. They were at once surrounded by small boats. In them were turbaned Arabs, with light-brown faces and bright, dark eyes;

jet black natives, muscular and glistening; naked little boys, and a few Indian merchants, determined not to miss an opportunity to trade. These people came aboard, salaamed, greeted the white men with the Arabic salute, and received the correct reply. They seemed to think the newcomers were Moslems, like themselves, and they sat down with them to an impromptu feast.

Through the interpreter, da Gama learnt that they did a lot of trade with the "Northern Arabs", those pale-faced men the Portuguese described as "White Moors". (To the Portuguese all coloured people were "Moors".) The Chronicler wrote delightedly that there were ships from the North in port at that very moment carrying cargoes of "gold, silver, cloves, pepper, ginger, silver rings, pearls, jewels, rubies . . ." and so on. They were told that these treasures were to be found in great abundance farther north, and that precious stones could be collected by the basketful. There was also, it seemed, a rich and fertile island, half of whose people were Christians.

But best of all—and this caused the adventurers to weep with joy—just ahead of them, along the coast, lay fabulous cities, ruled over by Prester John, and he himself, this so-long-sought-for Christian Monarch, lived in the interior, only a few days' march from the coast.

Da Gama asked for, and was given, two pilots, to bring the ships into Mozambique harbour. Meanwhile they anchored a short way out, off an island they named St. George. But now some doubts seem to have entered the minds of the Arabs as to the real nationality, and especially the religion, of these strange visitors. They were dark as Turks or Indians, yet they did not know these languages, and their Arabic was very scanty. They were surprisingly pleased to hear of Christians on an island, and even more so when they were told the news of Prester John.

Davana, the captive merchant, said he did not quite know what to make of them, though he liked them and wanted to help them. More suspicious still—Christian prisoners of the Arabs, probably Abyssinians, prostrated themselves before a picture of the Angel Gabriel which they saw on board, in a manner that aroused the gravest doubts in the mind of Shah Khwaza, the Sultan of Mozambique.

The final blow came when news was brought to him that the

strangers had been seen celebrating Mass in their ships at anchor off St. George. This was too much.

The Sultan made up his mind that the Christians must be eliminated. He did not feel any inclination to attack these strong ships and tough, storm-hardened men directly. But he laid an ambush for them, and very nearly succeeded in his designs. The pilots were told to disappear. One of them did so, but the other was caught and locked up. Da Gama in one boat and Coelho in another, both with parties of well-armed men, set out to look for the lost pilot, and also to get fresh water.

As they neared the shore, they were suddenly attacked by five boats, full of natives carrying spears, bows and arrows. A sharp fight followed—the first struggle for power in the long and bloody wars which were to last for nearly three centuries. But da Gama's weapons, cross-bows and bombards, were too much for the islanders, and they fled. The white men landed, determined to get the water, without which they could not sail; and although a palisade had been built round the springs, the defence put up was very light. Da Gama, who had succeeded in crushing a well-planned mutiny amongst his own well-trained men, was not the sort of man to be routed by a few natives and soft, coast-bred Arabs. He fought them off, bombarded the town severely, took the water he needed, returned to the ships, and immediately weighed anchor and departed, still carrying with him the solitary pilot.

One Portuguese had stayed behind in Mozambique—Joao Machado, the Degradado. His fate seemed sealed, for da Gama had handed him over to the Sultan as a hostage in exchange for the two pilots. How he managed to save himself from the fury of the Arabs when their town was bombarded by the Portuguese, and they saw the hated Christian ships sailing away unscathed, is not known. But he did survive, and later was picked up by Cabral and put ashore at Melinde. Here his task was to collect as much information as possible about Prester John, the fabulous Christian ruler.

This elusive potentate had been talked about and written about from the twelfth century onwards. Marco Polo located him in the farthest east “boundaring on the sun-rising”, but later he was said to rule Abyssinia. By the time of da Gama's voyage, the Kings of Europe were convinced of this, and

imagined him ruling in that blaze of glory which they believed the mysterious east so easily achieved, and of which the humbler, poorer monarchs of the west could only dream. Many were the messages sent to various tribes, towns and villages, in a tireless effort to make contact with this desirable potentate. Prester John himself was never found, and the mysterious land of Ethiopia, stories of whose hidden riches have misled European nations up to the time of her brief conquest by Mussolini's army —remained aloof and untamed.

Joao Machado did not discover the answer to the mystery, but in other ways he rendered good service, and later on he was taken to Goa, where Alfonso de Albuquerque made him Alcaide, or Governor.

The ships sailed on, past Zanzibar, with its forests of tall trees, and its white coral houses and mosques which glistened by the sea, till they grounded in the shoals off Pemba. Here they were impressed by the wooded hills which they described as a "lofty range of mountains beautiful of aspect" and they named them "Serra de Sao Raphael" in honour of their flagship.

I V

After a few days they journeyed to Mombasa. This island, whose other name is Mvita, or the Island of War, was an ally of Mozambique, and Shah Khwaza had sent a message to the Sultan of Mombasa telling him of the approach of the Christians, and advising him to destroy them before they could attack him.

As the Portuguese drew near they looked with eager interest at this famous town, half of whose inhabitants, they had been told, were Christians. They saw a bluff headland, a wilderness of bush; then plantations of palms and other green trees stretching out on both sides of the harbour, fringing the arms of blue water where they reached into the mainland. They saw "a large city seated upon an eminence washed by the sea. At its entrance stands a pillar and by the sea a low-lying fortress. . . ."

The Sultan of Mombasa was ready and waiting for the

intruders. He had made a plan—tortuous and complicated such as his Oriental mind would naturally devise, and therefore all the more likely to fail. He sent a dhow, the *Zabra*, to meet them. She sailed out, gay with flags, for this was a Moslem festival. The Portuguese thought the flags were in their honour, and were flattered by this sign of welcome.

The alert and cautious da Gama, however, was taking no chances. *Sao Raphael* hailed *Zabra* and da Gama spoke politely to the captain, but would allow no one to board his ships. The three Portuguese vessels lay rocking outside the reef, their sails furled, their crews silently watching the Arabs and natives in the *Zabra*, and the hundreds of fishermen swarming forth in their outrigger canoes, and clustering round the ships like large water-beetles.

The white men waited, their weapons in their hands, and the gun-crews ready, while their Captain-Major talked to the captain of the dhow. Da Gama gratefully accepted the presents of food which the *Zabra* brought, and the offer of two pilots, said to be Christians; but he was reluctant to sail into the harbour, as the Arabs pressed him to do, and decided to remain where he was until the next day. That night his ship was attacked by a hundred or so armed natives in canoes. They were driven off, but the incident made da Gama more suspicious than ever. However, he was still anxious to make contact with the Sultan, and establish friendly relations with the people of Mombasa, if it was possible to do so.

In the morning two more Degradados were selected to be "adventured on land in dangerous places". It is possible that the helpless criminals may have thought nostalgically of the security of the jails they had left behind, as one after another they were sent forth on errands from which it was more than likely they would never return. However, they had no choice in the matter. Accompanied by the invaluable Davana and four other men—whom the chronicler described as "honourable Moors"—the Portuguese convicts went ashore, their hearts full of misgivings and their minds of curiosity. What they saw was far from reassuring. Instead of large numbers of happy Christians with whom they had hoped to hear Mass, they beheld many men in irons; and they feared that these were Christians, since they were told that the Christians of that country were

often at war with the "Moors". It is likely that these chained men were Abyssinian captives.

The two envoys soon came to believe that the few Christian merchants living in Mombasa were kept in subjection, and not allowed to engage in trade of any description, without asking permission of the "Moorish King". On their way to the Sultan's palace the Degradados were invited into the house of a so-called Christian merchant. In proof of his faith he showed them a picture which he said was of the Holy Ghost; but the white men were becoming suspicious. Everything was done to lull their fears and to persuade them that the ships would be safe in the harbour.

The two men gazed their fill on the strange sights of the town. There were long lines of camels swaying disdainfully through the narrow streets, snarling and sneering; women enveloped in black, shapeless garments, Indian purdah ladies shuffling along with what looked like small white tents on their heads and hanging round them. There were big, handsome Muscat donkeys with scarlet fringes on their foreheads and scarlet cloths under their saddles; haughty Arabs in vast turbans, with silver belts holding curved daggers; and native Swahili women, queenly creatures with shining ebony skins, and the upright carriage and smooth walk which comes from centuries of carrying loads on the head. Their magnificent figures were tightly swathed from above the breasts down to the strong, slim ankles, in bright cotton robes.

When they had looked on all these wonderful things, the Degradados were escorted back to the boats and rowed to their ships, bringing with them samples of the fruit, pepper and grain with which the Sultan said they might load the vessels provided they would sail in and make fast to the wharf, where cargoes could be put on board. They told da Gama of all they had seen, and impressed on him the fact that they had been well treated, and given delicious food. They said that Mombasa was a flourishing city, and that they believed he should take the risk—well-armed as they were—of venturing through the reef into the harbour, for the sake of the trade which might be established. Da Gama, against his better judgment, was persuaded.

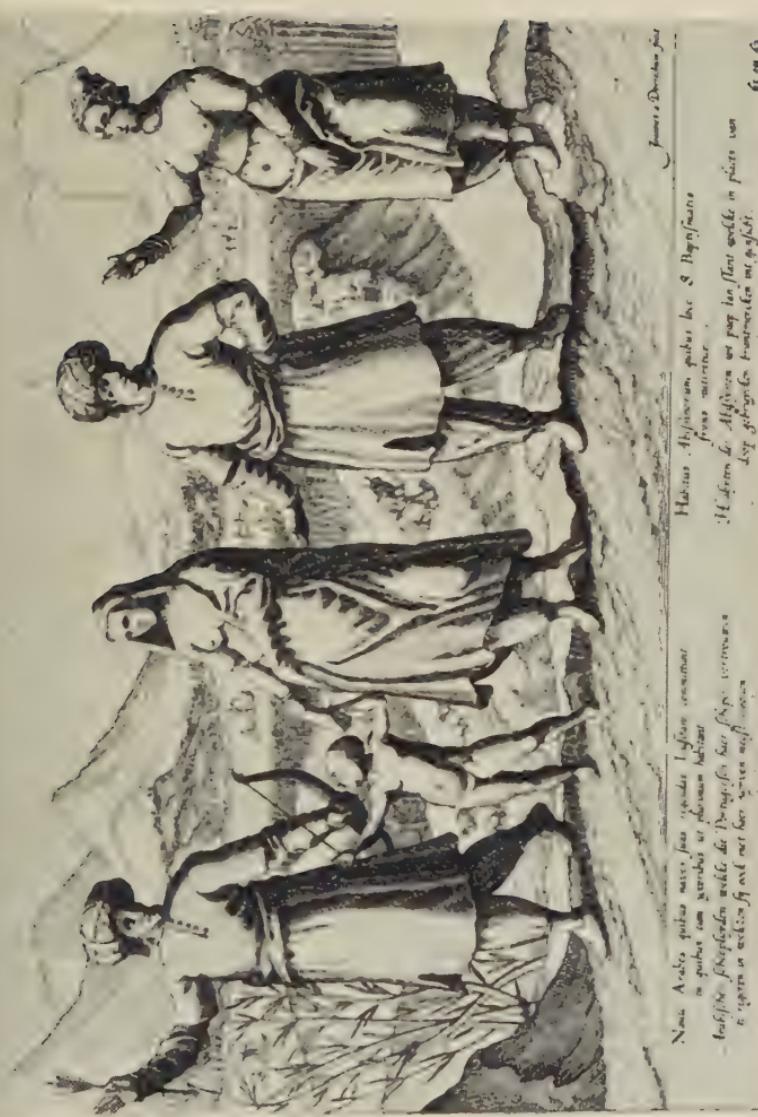
The sails were unfurled, the anchors raised, and very

cautiously, under the direction of the native pilots, the three ships in line ahead started nosing their way through the "door" in the coral reef. Then suddenly things went wrong. The leading ship struck a reef. Anchors were dropped, sails lowered, and all three ships stopped where they were, the crews shouting excitedly, officers bellowing orders, and da Gama furiously roaring for the pilots to be seized.

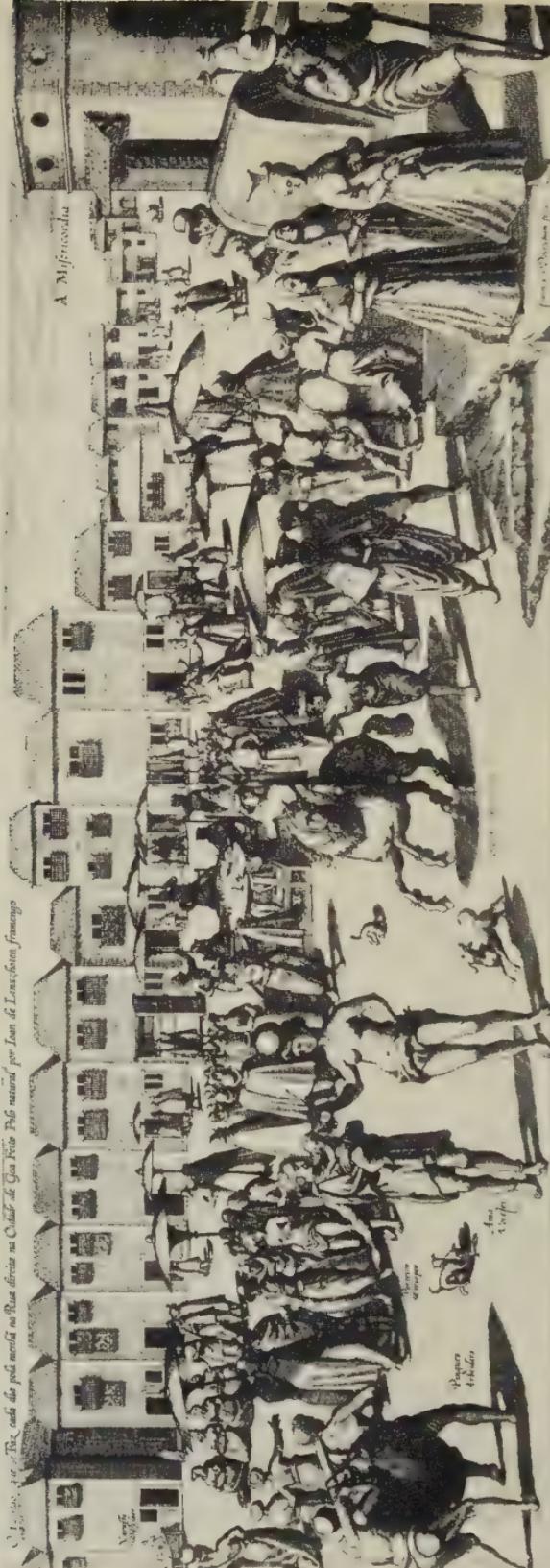
But he was too late. The pilots, and all except two of the native passengers, terrified by the yelling and scurrying of the Portuguese, jumped overboard. The two natives, both from Mozambique, were seized and questioned. With staring eyes and faces that peculiar grey colour that a negro turns when badly frightened, they first shook their heads dumbly and then, when able to speak, protested that they knew nothing. Da Gama did not believe them, and he was probably right, for these coast peoples were all more or less akin, and friendly with each other; so it was unlikely that the two from Mozambique were not aware that Mombasa had been warned, and was hostile to the Christians. They were shaken and buffeted and threatened with fearful things, but all they did was to cringe on the deck and cry for their mothers—"Mama yangu! Mama yangu!"

This made the fiery-tempered Captain-Major angrier than ever. He sent to the galley for boiling lard, and poured it on to his passengers. The treatment worked like magic. They instantly confessed the plot, which was to cause the ships to collide and then, in the confusion, to seize them. But for the good seamanship and discipline of the white men and the quick action taken in dropping the anchors, the plan might easily have succeeded. Da Gama managed to ease his ship off the reef and returned at once to his anchorage out in the open sea. Even then, however, he did not give up all hope of establishing friendly relations ashore, though he now clearly understood that the bombardment of Mozambique had set her ally, Mombasa, against him. Brave as he was, his heart must have sunk as he thought of the difficulties before him, and the disappointment he and his crews felt when they had at last reached some semblance of civilization, where they might hope to enjoy comfort, good food, and the friendship of people of a certain culture—only to meet with hatred and treachery.

That night armed swimmers tried to cut the *Sao Raphael's*



A sixteenth-century engraving from Linschoten's *Itinerario* depicting one of the Arab Seamen, whom the Portuguese used to employ to navigate their ships, and who usually lived in these ships with their wives. The group on the right are Ethiopians, whose form of Baptism entailed branding of the face.



Coagis huc vides ipsas reg portat et Indias
In fact et Ego maxime in locis
Plageb

Quod si quanta fore vident arra fundat
Praeponit tectis pellitatis sive quam?

Fox spesq; alteratio; uocatio; et
adueni illud praeponit operis
phane p. N. vobis.

Les yedentes uocatio; uocatio; et
ut eis auctoritatem in dico h. c.
operebatur dico I H V L. in h. c.

By Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum

An early sixteenth-century engraving of Jinschoten's vivid drawing of the Market at Goa with its merchandise and regular merchants. The groups on the left represent from left to right: workmen, a town crier and wet nurse.

cable, but the watch saw them and gave the alarm, and the swimmers silently slipped away through the dark waters.

For two more days da Gama waited, hoping in vain to pick up a new pilot. Then with a heavy heart, a cheerful laugh and brave words on his lips for his despondent and disillusioned men, he gave the order to sail north.

CHAPTER THREE

1498-1519

I

FOR the next two days, which were Good Friday and Easter Saturday, the Portuguese sailed up the coast. They passed small settlements of Arab houses standing in groves of palm trees; and clusters of native huts, roofed with palm-leaves—primitive homes, simple, cool and dry, such as the fishermen and peasants of the littoral still prefer to live in, despite the examples of elaborate permanent buildings set before their eyes by their various civilized and cultured conquerors.

Da Gama and his men viewed these signs of human habitation with mixed feelings. Their relationship, so far, had been happier with the unsophisticated African natives than with the sharp-witted members of the master race.

As they saw more and more Arab villages, they wondered gloomily what sort of reception was in store for them at their next port of call; and they approached Melinde with the utmost caution and many misgivings.

Meanwhile, for their part, the people of Melinde watched the strange ships with fearful eyes—stories carried by word of mouth among coloured people become just as exaggerated in their telling as gossip among the white races. The Melinde Arabs had heard that da Gama and his men were fearless and ruthless; that they were dressed from head to foot in impenetrable steel; and that they had utterly demolished the great city of Mozambique with cannon fire, in pure wantonness, while on their way to seize water, food and women.

They also appeared to have some uncanny prescience which caused them to be aware of any trap set for them, before they could be taken in it. In fact the Arabs believed that they were the deadliest, most powerful enemies who had ever approached the shores of the Azanian Sea. So they watched the ships creep nearer to the pretty white town; and the Portuguese watched the crowds of people thronging the water-front, and both sides wondered what the future held.

It was Easter Sunday. Mass had been said on board and the men felt comforted and strengthened after their communion.

The ships dropped anchor and the crews waited. No one came out to greet them. So da Gama sent his "Honourable Moor", Davana, ashore, to salute the rulers of this strange city. Davana was received by the Sultan, and to his great relief discovered that the latter was delighted to hear of their quarrel with the people of Mombasa—apparently any enemy of Mombasa was welcome in Melinde. The two towns had been at war off and on for centuries. The Sultan gave Davana a feast and then he sent him back to the ships, escorted by "one of the King's cavaliers and a Sharif"—a descendant of the Prophet and an important person in the life of Melinde.

The Sultan also sent presents of sheep, chickens, and vegetables to the strangers and begged them to enter the port under the guidance of a local pilot, and to regard themselves as his guests. However, da Gama was this time very much on his guard—he sent polite messages to the Sultan, accompanied by presents; although he must have felt slightly foolish when he remembered the opulence and comparative luxury with which these Arab Sultans were surrounded, and contrasted them with the miserable trade goods which were all he had to offer. These consisted of three basins for washing purposes, two strings of coral, and an uninspiring garment described as a "surtout such as is worn by Brothers of Mercy".

The Arabs, however, are great gentlemen, and their manners are flawless, even though they may be plotting against one's life. They displayed no outward amusement or contempt when confronted with these meagre gifts—suitable for the wild natives of West and South Africa, but hardly fit for the ruler of a people whose very kitchen utensils were inlaid with ivory.

(Later, when the Portuguese finally reached India, the presents for the Zamarin of Calicut were "set out on handkerchiefs" for the inspection of the Wali and his party of advisers. The list has come down to us.

"12 pieces of striped cotton,
4 scarlet hoods,
6 hats,
4 strings of coral,

1 case of 6 basins,
1 case of sugar,
2 cases of oil,
2 cases of honey."

The Indians were so taken aback at this display that they could barely conceal their laughter. Poor da Gama, covered in confusion, then tried to explain that these gifts were from himself personally, and not from the Great Western King. He floundered on, making matters worse, by adding that he himself was not a rich merchant but only an ambassador. This must have seemed the most extraordinary arrangement to the fantastically wealthy and ostentatious Indians; whose huge trousers were heavy with gold and silver embroideries, whose naked torsos were almost hidden behind necklaces of immense pearls and emeralds, and whose elephants had gold paint on their toenails and precious stones on the nets which hung over their foreheads, to say nothing of pictures painted inside their vast ears. However, the Sultan of Melinde accepted the presents gracefully, and then set forth in his royal barge to see the visitors. Da Gama entered his pinnace and went to meet him. The Sultan wore a damask robe trimmed with green satin, and a rich turban, while a curved dagger in a jewel-encrusted, silver sheath was stuck through his belt, itself made of silver squares set with precious stones. He sat on a cushioned chair of worked bronze, under the shade of a crimson umbrella. His musicians accompanied him, playing on "Two trumpets of ivory richly carved and of the size of a man, which were blown from a hole in the side". (These were probably the traditional "trumpets" made from elephants tusks, and used only for Royalty.)

Da Gama, conscious of the unimpressive gifts he had offered this wealthy and important personage, had a sudden inspiration; and made him a present of the prisoners Paul da Gama had taken from a dhow near Mozambique. This delighted the Sultan—he already had plenty of slaves, but he was touched at da Gama's gesture in giving him these subjects of his hated enemy. After a friendly talk the Sultan was rowed round the ships, amidst salvoes from the bombards, cheers from the sailors and blasts on the trumpets.

The din must have been terrific.

The Sultan begged da Gama to come and rest in one of his palaces, but the Captain-Major, much as he may have longed for the comforts of life ashore, was no longer to be caught by smooth Arab manners; and so he made the excuse that he had

been forbidden by his King to land in foreign countries. The Sultan perfectly understood his reluctance, and was not in the least offended. He sent him, as a mark of friendship, a boat laden with copper kettles, cauldrons of boiled rice, fat sheep roasted whole, fresh butter, cakes of wheat and rice flour, roasted and boiled chickens stuffed with rice; and vegetables and fruits, coconuts and sugar canes.

The happy voyagers ate until they could eat no more.

After all the emotion and the food the Captain-Major needed a rest. This, however, was too much to hope for. The following day he was rowed along the front of the town. He was impressed by the fine buildings, the tall white houses with their many windows; and by the palm groves and maize and vegetable gardens which he saw all around.

II

The Portuguese had had a long, hard journey. Battered by storms, ravaged by disease, in danger whenever they landed on the shores of these strange countries; living perpetually in discomfort and under the shadow of death, surrounded by hatred and treachery the moment they set foot among the cunning Arabs—it must have seemed too good to be true to meet suddenly with such kindness as was shown them by the people of Melinde. They wondered what was behind it all. The answer was quite simple. It was merely the age-old enmity between Melinde and Mombasa which made the Melinde Arabs open their arms in genuine welcome to these fugitives from the south—brave men, in well-armed ships, and representing one of the most powerful nations in the western world.

No wonder da Gama and his men seemed like gifts from Allah—to be cherished accordingly.

Before long the Portuguese became convinced that the friendliness shown them was sincere; and they decided to risk everything, go ashore and revel in the creature comforts. They were rapturously received. The Sultan took every care of them and ordered his people to do likewise.

“In order that our people should not be cheated in the price of things, the King ordered it to be cried all over the

city that nobody was to sell anything to the Portuguese for more than it was worth, and if anyone did so he would send and burn his house, so that all observed this order," wrote da Gama's chronicler.

In time da Gama and the Sultan entered into a pact of peace and friendship. The white men quickly regained their strength and spirits, basking in the sun which shone gently and not with undue heat, in the bracing sea winds which blew along the coast and through the streets of the town, and in the soft air scented with frangipangi, sea-weed and the deep rich smell of the African jungle.

The Portuguese were entertained with music, feasts, and sham fights. They made many friends among the Arab gentlemen, but the Arab ladies remained invisible. However, there were compensations. These fighting men had their own ideas of beauty, and have left us their description of the points to be sought for in their native charmers.

"A round-shaped head, lips like a musket muzzel, teeth like cowries, arms that bend back at the elbows, eyebrows that meet, a nose like a sword, the neck of a gazelle, a face like a compass in shape and in sincerity and truthfulness."

The women wore—and do to this day—garments called *kikois*; long, graceful, toga-like affairs, which have been imported from Aden for nearly two thousand years. They are brightly coloured and envelop the wearer from above the breasts down to the feet. Wrapped tightly round the body, they display the splendid torsos and emphasize the upright, swaying walk of the Swahili.

Melinde is a very ancient town; it was known to Ptolemy under the name of Essina. The Portuguese travellers described it thus: "A town of the Moors, which has a King. The inhabitants are dusky and black, and the men go naked from the waist upwards, and from that downwards they cover themselves with cloths of cotton and silk and others wear wraps like cloaks and handsome caps on their heads. The trade is great which they carry on in cloth, gold, ivory, copper, quicksilver, and much other merchandise, with both Moors and Gentiles of the Kingdom of Cambay, who come to their port with ships laden with cloth, which they buy in exchange for gold, ivory and wax. Both parties find great profit in this. There are plenty of provisions in this

town of rice, millet, and some wheat, which is brought to them from Cambay, and plenty of fruit for there are many gardens and orchards. There are here many of the large-tailed sheep, and of all other meat as above, there are also oranges, sweet and sour."

After a long rest the Portuguese were ready to continue on their way. Their ships were stocked with all the fresh water and food they could carry; the hulls had been careened and dressed with shark's oil, the sails patched with spare canvas sewn on with coconut fibre, and the Captain-Major's cabin was hung with gay cloths and floored with precious carpets from Muscat and Persia. Before he left, da Gama erected a pillar overlooking the sea.

He told the Sultan that his King had ordered him not to put up such a Pillar in any place "except in a country in which they knew true friendship and sincere love, such as you, Sire, have shown us out of your goodness". (A pillar stands near the modern town of Malindi, and though, according to Strandes, this is not the original one, the local inhabitants firmly believe that it is, indeed, Vasco da Gama's stone.)

They obtained the services of a famous pilot named Ibn Majid, a native of Gujerat; and thus equipped they set forth on the last stage of their momentous journey, sailing eastward to India.

The Portuguese arrived at their destination safely, and after visiting the rulers of various countries along the West Coast, and sailing as far south as Calicut, they turned their faces homewards. They had been enormously impressed by the sight of the riches in India, and started back for Portugal determined to return in great force and annex this fabulous country for their King.

Da Gama came home with several additions to his personnel. Five of them he had kidnapped. Another, named Moncaide, had a strange history, for he said he was born in Seville, and had been captured by Moors when a child of five. His parents had disappeared, and he had been brought up as a Moslem. He was, however, so he assured the Portuguese, always "a Christian in his soul", which was remarkable, considering the tender age at which he had lost his earliest faith. He boarded da Gama's ship at Calicut and returned with him to Portugal, where he

was baptized, though his shipmates always referred to him as the "Moor of Tunis".

There was also the "Moor" who joined da Gama at Anjediva Island. He was about forty years old and spoke the Italian of Venice. He seems to have been in reality a Polish Jew, for he said his parents had fled from Posen, during the time of King Casimir's persecution of the Jews. They reached Palestine where they stayed for a while, then moved on to Alexandria; where he was born. When still a youth he had gone to India, and here his industry and integrity brought him advancement.

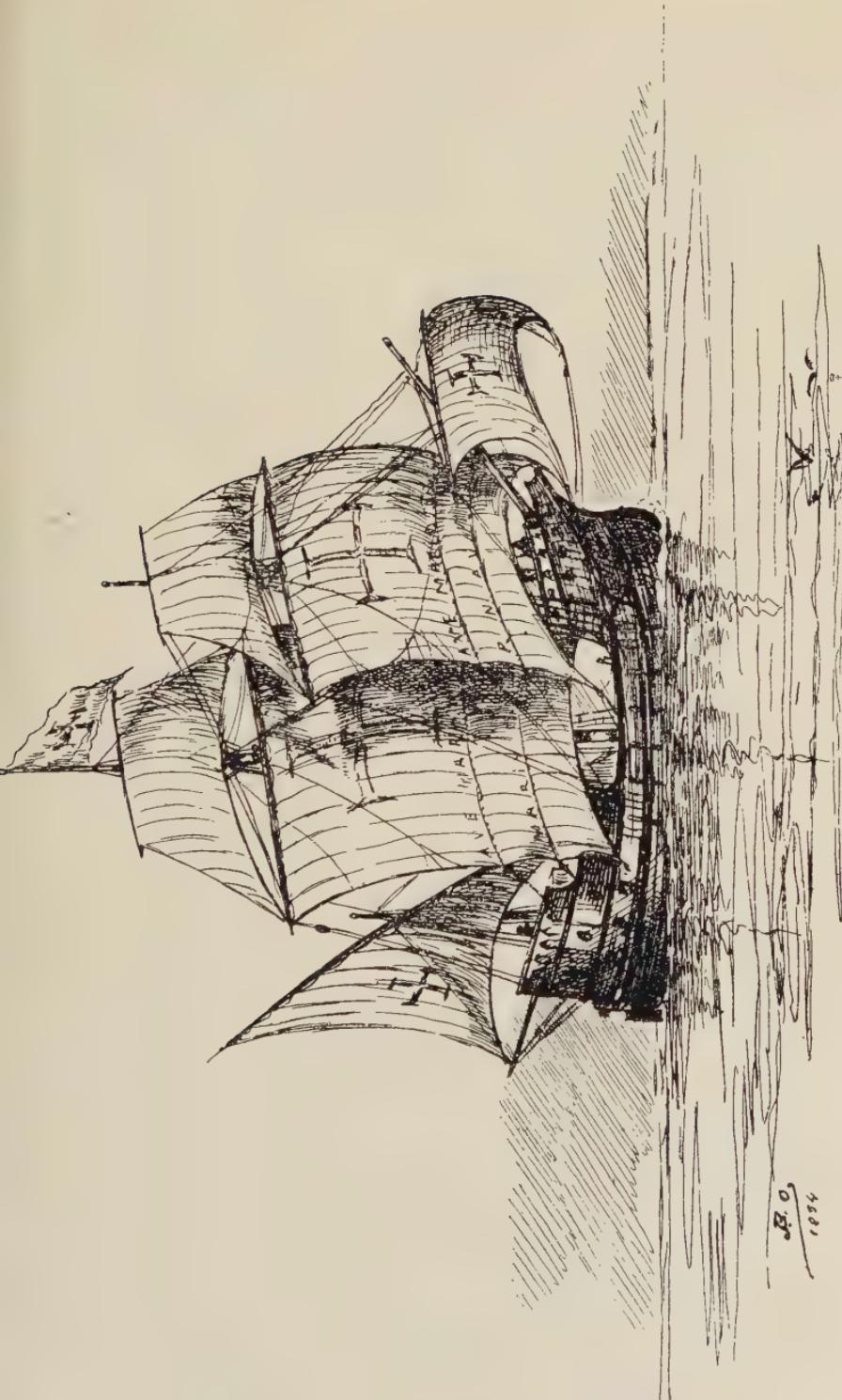
When da Gama arrived he was in the service of the Governor of Goa. He eagerly joined the Portuguese adventurers and returned with them to Lisbon. Here he became a Christian, and was baptized in the name of Gaspar da Gama. Later, he sailed with Cabral as interpreter, and gave such valuable information regarding Oriental customs and trade that he was granted a pension. He finally married a Portuguese lady and died a rich and honoured man.

On the homeward journey da Gama again landed at Melinde, where he received a great welcome from his Arab and native friends. He took on board an ambassador from the Sultan of Melinde to the King of Portugal, and many splendid presents for his monarch, his family and friends.

Thence he sailed to Zanzibar, which had made a great impression on the visitors at their first visit. They found that the people "live in great luxury and abundance; they dress in very good cloths of silk and cotton, which they buy in Mombasa of the merchants from Cambay, who reside there. Their wives adorn themselves with many jewels of gold from Sofala; and silver, in chains, ear-rings, bracelets and ankle-rings and are dressed in silk stuffs; and they have many mosques and hold the Alcoran of Mohamed."

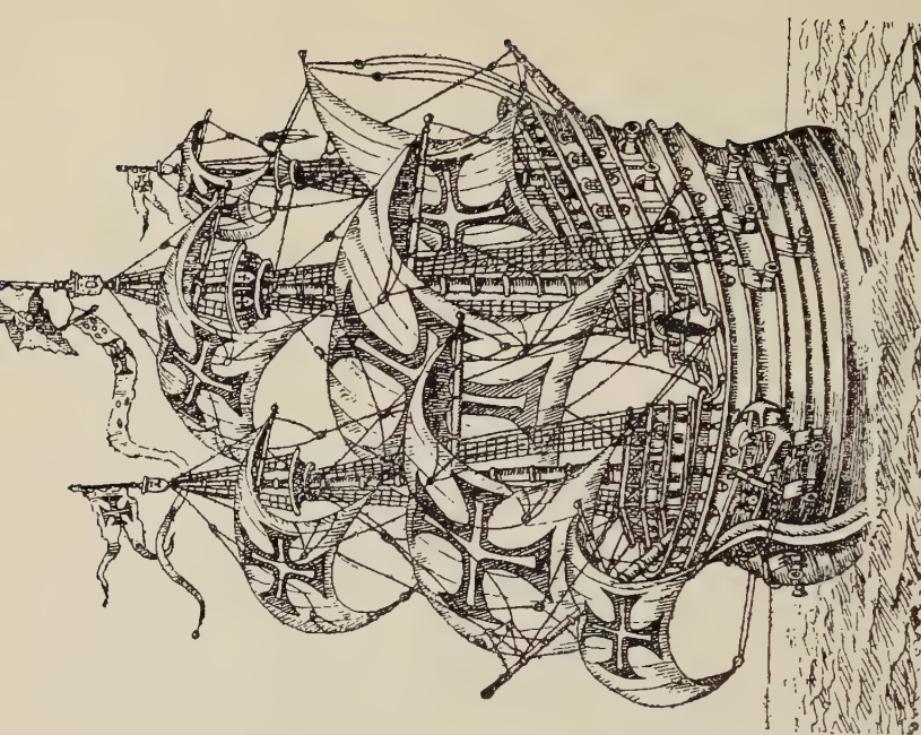
The Portuguese determined to return in strength and take all the islands and the coast for the King of Portugal.

Da Gama endured a great sorrow when he was nearly home, for his beloved brother Paul died of a lingering illness, in the city of Angra in the Azores. He was buried there, in the Monastery of Sao Francisco. His loss was a terrible blow, for he was as gentle as he was brave; a fine seaman and a great leader, who was adored by his men.



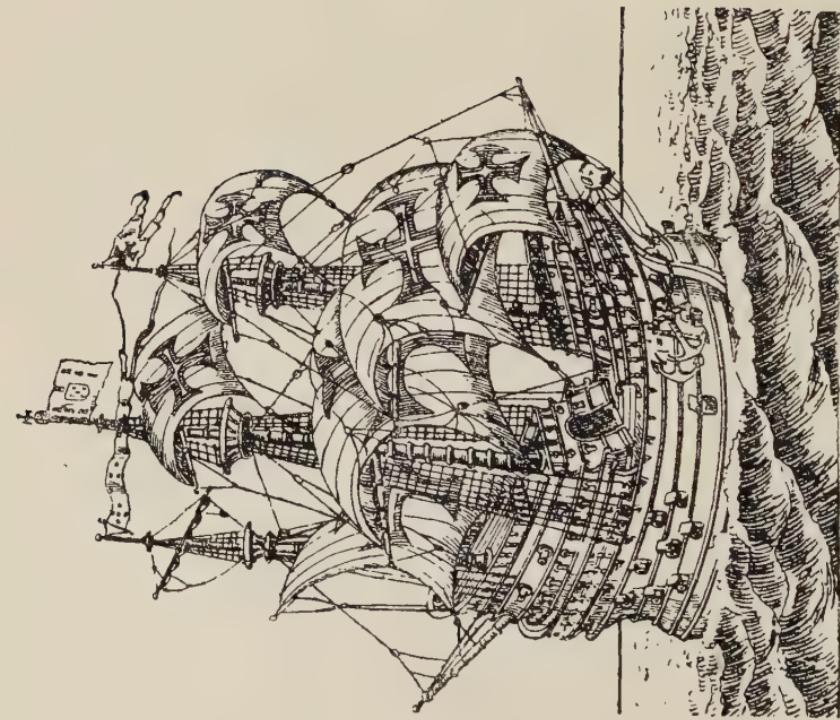
By kind permission of the Biblioteca E Museu de Marinha Lisbon

A Sailing Ship of the fourteenth century called Redonda.



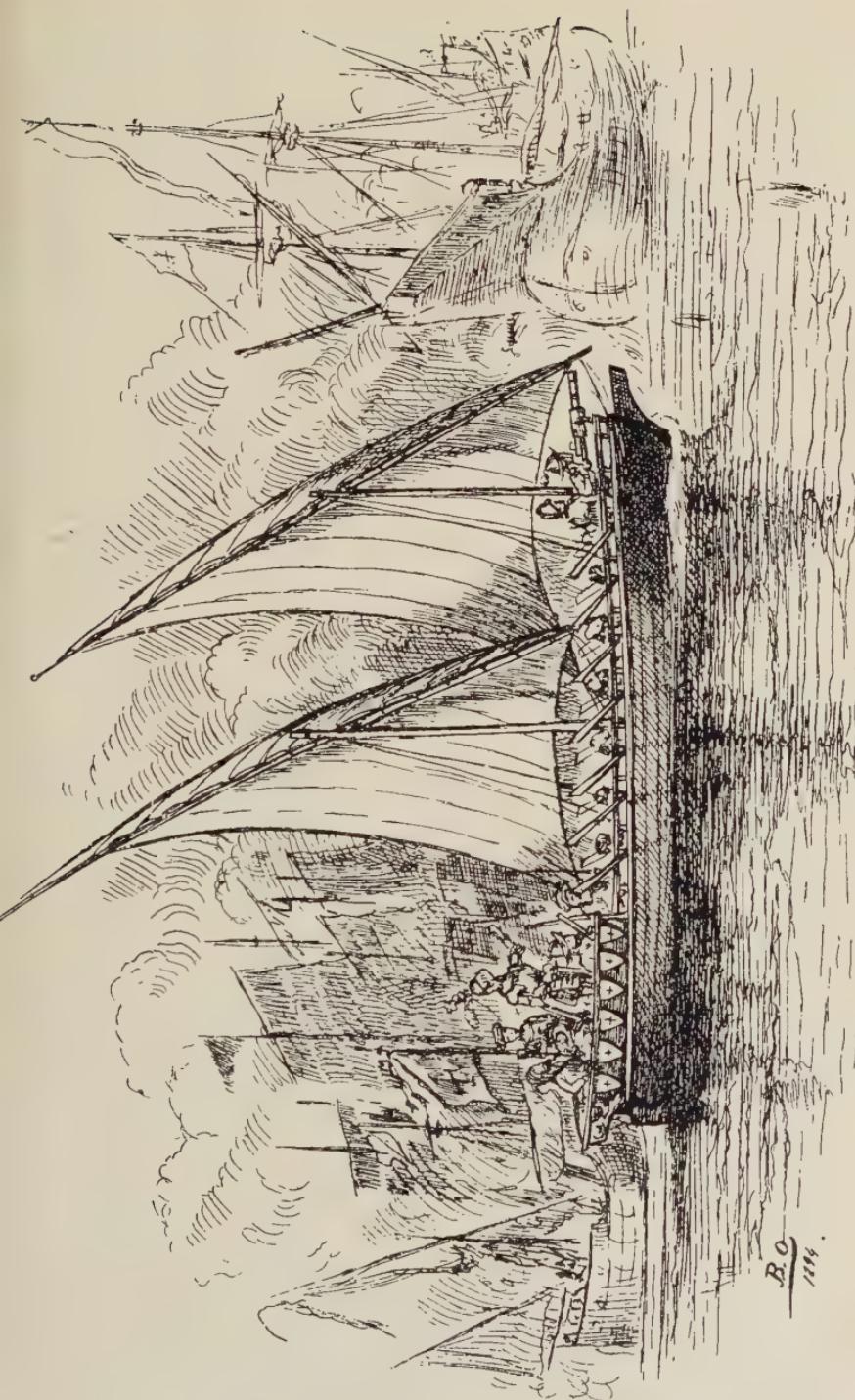
The Caravel *Trindade*, 1511.

By kind permission of the Biblioteca E Museu de Marinha Lisbon



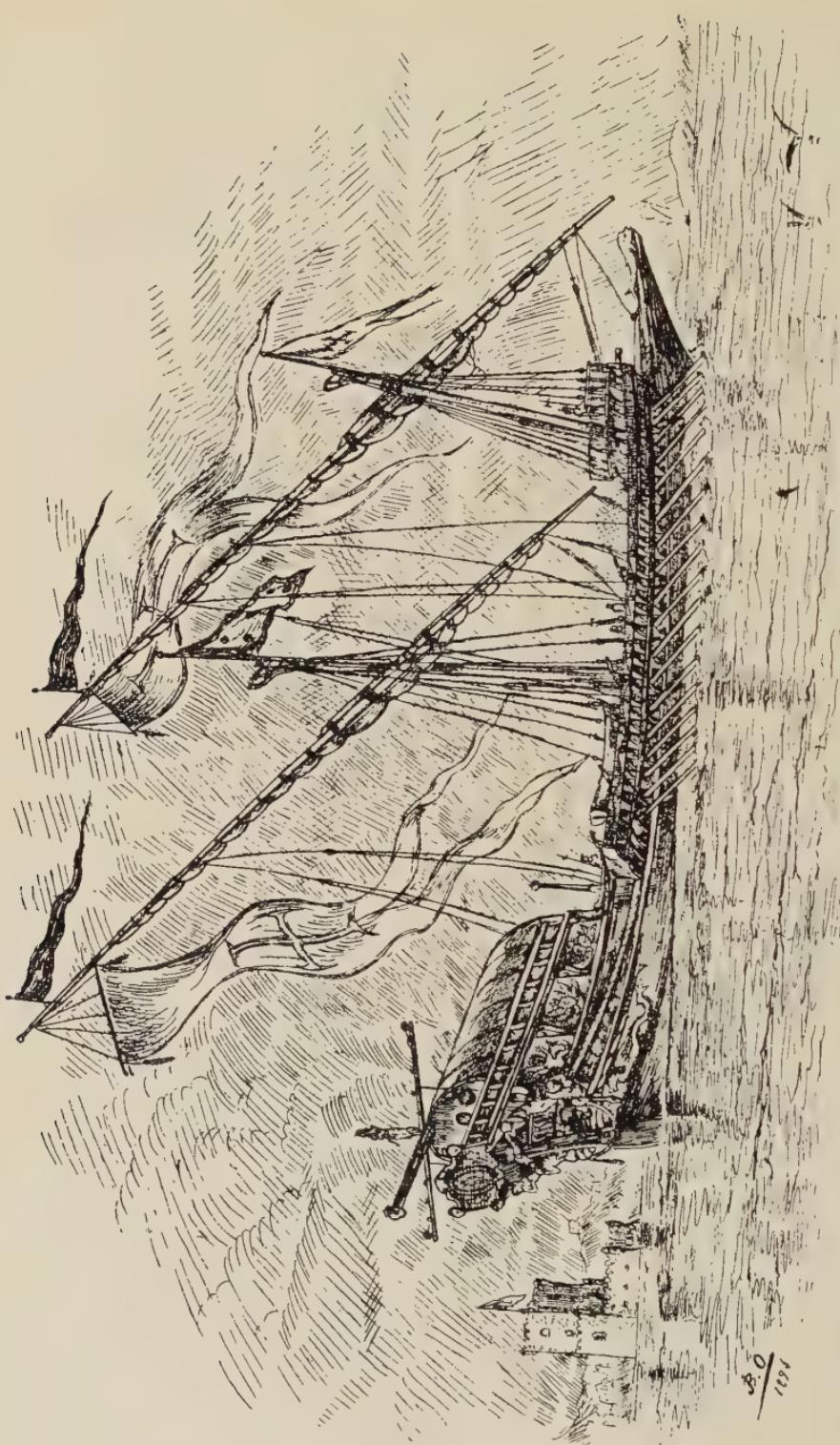
By kind permission of the Biblioteca E Museu de Marinha Lisbon

The Caravel *Flor de la Mar*, lost after the conquest of Malaca in 1511.



By kind permission of the Biblioteca E Museu de Marinha Lisboa

A Portuguese Brigantine of the fifteenth century.



By kind permission of the Biblioteca E Museu de Marinha Lisboa

A Royal Portuguese Galley, end of sixteenth century.

When the three battered little ships turned into the mouth of the Tagus they beheld a new land-mark—a great tower had risen on the seaward side of the monastery at Belem, built by King Manuel as a look-out for the return of his fleet of adventurers. Here the King had sat, day after day, watching the bright sea, and wondering if he would ever behold his brave captains again.

Lisbon gave da Gama and his surviving men a tremendous welcome. The streets blazed with colour, from the shawls flung over the balconies, the flags which flew from the roof-tops, and the carpets of flowers tossed under foot.

In the cathedral there were joyous thanksgiving services and tender masses for the dead, banquets at the Palace, festivities in the great houses, and ceremonious presentations of costly gifts from the merchant Princes. Such appreciation and pride in their achievements were heart-warming rewards for all the travellers had gone through.

The King listened to da Gama's story of the wonder he and his men had seen, and decided to send another fleet to India. While new preparations were being made da Gama himself rested in Portugal. He was married to a lady of noble family, Catherina de Atayde, daughter of Alvaro de Atayde, Alcaide-mor of Alvor. The King was anxious to honour the Captain-Major, but da Gama's wishes were not easy to fulfil. He wanted to take his place among the nobles of Portugal, as a landowner and a wealthy man. His father had been Alcaide of Sines and it was there that Vasco and his brothers and sisters were born and grew up; now he wanted to own the small town on the sea, and as much of the bleak land surrounding it as he could acquire.

The king was very ready to grant da Gama's requests, but the place belonged to the religious Order of Sao Thiago, and the Order refused to let it go. Da Gama was hurt and angry. The land he wanted was not rich or fertile—in fact much of it was just a waste of sand—but his heart was there, and he felt that, after all he had faced and endured for Portugal's sake, such an impoverished stretch of country was not too much to ask by way of reward.

He also hoped to be made a Count, but this title could only be given him if it carried with it a certain amount of land.

Despite the King's efforts, the Order remained adamant;

with a complete disregard for the claims of one who had laid the foundations of an enormous new Christian state to be added to the Church's fold. The most that Manuel could do for da Gama was to grant him one thousand cruzados and the title of Dom. With this, for the present, da Gama had to be content.

III

King Manuel began now to call himself Lord of the Conquest, Navigation and Commerce of India. This was, perhaps, a little premature. However, he meant to exploit da Gama's discoveries as quickly as possible. He started to equip a fleet of fifteen ships, which was to sail under the Captaincy of Pedro Alvares Cabral. This was to be a very different expedition from the one which had set forth into the unknown in 1497. This time there were maps of the Coast and charts of the reefs, and even if they were rather inaccurate, they were better than nothing. The ships themselves were heavily-armed, and the sailors and soldiers, well-tried veterans of battle and the sea.

Cabral, instead of sailing down the coast of Africa, steered on a westerly course until, caught by sudden storms, he was driven on until he made the coast of Brazil. He landed, raised the Portuguese flag, and after Mass had been said, he officially annexed this vast new territory for the Crown of Portugal. Then he sailed away towards the south-east, and eventually rounded the cape and travelled up the East Coast of Africa.

He reached Mozambique and Kilwa. The Arabs must have been disagreeably surprised when they saw once again those square sails advancing towards them, each with the hated Christian emblem painted upon it. And this time there were not just three small ships, battered and weary from their stormy voyage, carrying only a handful of Portuguese—but fifteen vessels and hundreds of well-armed men, who were not to be dealt with lightly.

Cabral was politely received by the Sultan of Kilwa. He cruised about the neighbourhood slowly, finding many inhabited islands, all subject to the coast town. Fairly soon he discovered that some of the chiefs in Kilwa were intriguing against him.

However, he took no action for the time being, for he was "a man of gentle disposition". He went to Mozambique, where he picked up the Degradado Joao Machado, and then continued on his way to Mombasa, but here he relegated his "gentle disposition" to the background, and inflicted a sudden, sharp punishment on the town which had dealt so treacherously with his great fore-runner.

Cabral's large fleet of powerful ships took the Arabs completely by surprise. He sailed past their fortress which overlooked the open sea but was not built to guard the harbour entrance. He found the gap in the reef on the ocean side of Mombasa island, and took his ships between the Arab town and the headland opposite; and even as the Arabs and natives watched in bewilderment and dismay, he started to pound their houses to bits with cannon balls from his bombards. As buildings crashed and fell and the narrow streets filled with rubble, Cabral's ships drew up to the wharf and his soldiers rushed ashore and hurled themselves on the town. There was no resistance, the islanders were taken completely by surprise, those that could escape fled into the thick bush which grew right up to the edge of the houses.

The soldiers looted and burned, carried off the shrieking young women, tore jewels and clothes from the older ones, and came staggering back to the wharf laden with such spoils and riches as they had never dreamed of. Not content with sacking the city, they razed the Arab fort to the ground. Mombasa was now in no condition to oppose or harry the Portuguese, and Cabral, having taught the people a lesson, sailed on to Melinde.

The old Sultan was overjoyed to see him. He had suffered for his friendship with da Gama, for after the latter's departure, the Sultan of Mombasa had savagely attacked Melinde and killed many of the people. He begged Cabral to stay with him and crush his enemy once and for all, but the Captain assured him that this was as good as done. Besides, though he did not tell the Sultan this, his private instructions were to sail to India, to take as much land as possible for Portugal, and to convert the natives to Christianity. He was to begin with preaching and, if that failed, to proceed to "sharp determination of the sword".

He left Joao Machado at Melinde with orders to collect a caravan and travel into Abyssinia, to find Prester John. Cabral had brought back to Melinde the Sultan's ambassador, who had sailed to Portugal with da Gama. He returned with splendid gifts, far exceedingly anything poor da Gama had been able to offer the Arabs, and with stories of the wealth and power of Portugal, which lost nothing in the telling.

Cabral went on to India, and the Arabs were left to their own devices.

Two years later, da Gama started on his second voyage to the east. This time he had with him ten very well equipped, heavily-armed ships. He touched at Sofala and continued to Mozambique. He was in a belligerent mood, but his old enemy Sultan Khwaza was dead, and the new ruler had a deep respect for the white men's courage, intelligence, and guns. The Sultan welcomed them to Mozambique and did all he could to make a good impression.

Very different was da Gama's present position from the precarious one he had occupied on his previous visit.

Now he came, not as a weary and storm-driven adventurer, but as the commander of strong forces and the representative of a powerful nation. Even his crews were an improvement on the rough adventurers and degradados of the first voyage, being "good men-at-arms and gentlemen of birth". A few weeks later da Gama was joined by nine more ships, under the command of his nephew, Estevan da Gama, son of his brother Avres. The fleet of nineteen vessels sailed majestically on to Kilwa, and just as Cabral had loyally avenged the insults and dangers da Gama had endured at Mombasa, so da Gama now made Kilwa pay for having plotted against Cabral.

He did not attack the town, but marched with a strong force to the Sultan's palace, and took Sultan Ibrahim prisoner. The people of the coast understood the policy of the strong hand, they respected the white men who punished them for their hostility, and they saw the wisdom of the people of Melinde who had helped the Portuguese so generously when they had no means of retaliation, and were now their dear and trusted friends. Da Gama forced from Ibrahim a promise to pay a large ransom in gold, after which he released him; receiving a rich hostage in his place. Once out of Portuguese hands, Ibrahim

refused to pay, but the hostage produced the money, and was allowed to go free.

On the way to Melinde da Gama saw a strange vessel which he thought to be Egyptian. He hailed her, but she hoisted her second sail and fled. Da Gama overtook her, grappled and boarded her, killing everyone he found except for a few children —little boys such as all Arab boats carry, to help with the food and odd jobs, and to learn the ways of the sea. He took the terrified youngsters into his own ship and managed to tow the prize, which was laden with spices, inside Melinde Harbour.

There, he received a great welcome. With Mombasa lying in ashes and nineteen fine Portuguese ships in his harbour, the old Sultan felt he could end his days in peace. He blessed Allah for having brought the Portuguese voyagers to his town in the first place, and for having put it into his heart to succour and cherish them. And da Gama thanked God and all the saints for these good friends. The Sultan begged him to leave some men-at-arms with them in case there was more trouble from their Southern neighbours. He agreed to do so, and built a little church, a copy of that of the Navigators at Sagres, in Portugal, where the Christians might worship.

IV

When da Gama arrived home from his second journey, he retired to the little town of Evora, in the province of Alemteyo. He was now high in favour with Manuel, as indeed he deserved to be; nor did he underrate the services which he had rendered to his Sovereign. Especially pleased with the tribute from Kilwa, Manuel gave him a hereditary pension of 40,000 reis, worth in those days, £483. Da Gama built himself a grand house in Evora. He decorated it with paintings of Indian people and plants and animals, and there was gilding on some of the walls, which he assured his admiring guests was made from true Indian gold, which he himself had brought back from the East. The street in which this fine house stood is still called Rua das Casas Pintados.

Vasco was now known as Admiral Dom Vasco da Gama:

a high-sounding title, but one which did not altogether satisfy him. He was a man of great ambition, and he felt the utmost impatience when he remembered all he had dared and done for his country. Thanks to him, Portugal would gain vast new territories and riches, and many Christian subjects; but meanwhile he was being frustrated and kept out of his home by a parcel of monks who lived on the fat of the land, who never faced danger, and whose greatest adventure lay in hunting down some wretched heretic or Jew, and presiding over his torture at the hands of the Inquisition. In spite of all he had achieved for Manuel, the King was too weak or too cowardly to insist that the Order of Sao Thiago should give way to his devoted and successful Admiral. So da Gama determined to fend for himself, as he had so often done before.

He moved into the town of Sines and began to build himself a new house. He travelled about in great state and behaved as if the place did indeed belong to him. He was adored by the populace, who were proud of their locally-born hero; he was open-handed, gay and debonair; he had a charming wife and family, and many decorative friends and picturesque followers.

The Order, realizing it was both rash and useless to tackle him personally, sent complaining messages to the King. Manuel ordered da Gama to leave Sines within a month and not to return without the permission of the Order of Sao Thiago. The Admiral obeyed, but he was only within his rights when he reminded his Monarch that the title and lands which he had been promised had not even materialized. He was now receiving three Royal Pensions and his total income was about £2,000 a year. This was a large sum in those days, but even so, da Gama saw no reason why Manuel should not keep his promises.

In 1508 the harassed King ordered one of his nobles named Luis d'Arca to cede to da Gama the Alcaideria-mor of Villa-franco de Xira; but d'Arca ignored the order and da Gama continued to await his reward in vain.

He was treated as men of his calibre so often are. His courage and initiative were made full use of, and the rich gifts of territory and people which he brought to his country were greedily seized on; but once the trail he had blazed was open and the way made easier, once lesser men could sail those no longer strange seas, once his interests crossed those of the professional courtiers

and sycophants surrounding the King—then he could be staved off from his recompense with many promises, and delays.

He was only an Admiral ashore, a sailor without a ship, and he really hardly mattered any longer.

Ten years after Manuel's latest promise had remained unfulfilled, da Gama made up his mind to go. He asked for an audience and informed his sovereign that, since he had never received the title or lands promised so long ago, he wished to leave Portugal and offer his services elsewhere. Manuel was startled and upset at this unexpected show of firmness. He could hardly refuse his Admiral permission to emigrate, but he asked him not to leave before the end of the year. Then, he began a frantic search for lands which would enable him to grant da Gama the promised title.

The King had a nephew, Dom Jayme, Duke of Braganza, who was a great admirer of da Gama, and wished to help him—at a price. He owned the towns of Vidiguiera and Villa de Frades, and these he offered to sell to the Admiral in return for one of the Royal Pensions of 1,000 cruzados and for a further cash sum of 4,000 cruzados in gold. The King graciously granted the two towns to da Gama, his heirs and successors, together with all the privileges formerly held in those two places by the Duke.

On 29 December, 1519, he conferred on Dom Vasco the title of "Conde de Vidigueira" and thus, sixteen years after it was made, the Royal promise was finally fulfilled.

CHAPTER FOUR

1504-1507

I

DURING the years immediately following da Gama's second voyage, the sea-route to India was increasingly used by ships from Portugal. The Portuguese had soon discovered the course of the monsoons which blew from the north-east during one season of the year and from the south-west during another. Borne on these winds the Arab dhows, with their tall, unwieldy sails bellying, came in stately procession from Muscat to Lamu, Melinde, Mombasa, and Zanzibar in early spring; and returned home later laden with slaves, spices, cloth and precious metals. The Arabs had tried to keep this knowledge secret from the Europeans, but it did not take the Portuguese navigators long to discover the directions of the prevailing winds.

The Portuguese commanders were brave and enterprising men. They took their small vessels through the tempests haunting the Cape up into the region of the monsoons, and through gaps in the coral reefs guarding the coast and the islands. They frequently led their troops ashore in headlong raids which forced the far more numerous Arabs and their black soldiers to respect and obey them. It was essential for the Portuguese to establish safe harbours where their fleets could revictual during the long trip to India. The only way to do this was to cow those who were hostile into a state of submission, and to strengthen the ties of affection which bound them to the few who had from the first been their friends.

The island of Zanzibar had always attracted them. It was at this time ruled by an ancient native dynasty, which claimed descent from the Prophet. These rulers were paler in colour than their subjects and had a strain of Persian blood. Their remotest ancestor in Zanzibar was probably some adventurous Persian who had settled in the island about nine hundred years before the Portuguese came. The head of the family was always known as the Mwenyi Mkuu, the "Great Master".

These Sultans were intelligent and comparatively civilized. They dressed and lived like their Arab fellow-rulers along the coast, but were, in fact, Africans and not Asiatics. Among their strange possessions were two tall, sacred drums, male and female, said to beat by themselves when any grave disaster threatened the island.

In 1504 Ruy Lourenco Rivasco landed on the southern end of the island in the face of considerable opposition. The Arabs and natives fought well, but the invaders' weapons and aggressive spirit were too much for them. Slowly the defenders retreated until they were at the gates of the Mwenyi Mkuu's palace, where they were forced to surrender.

The Portuguese Commander and some of his Captains were then conducted to the ruler's presence. He was dressed in a long, coloured silken robe, with a turban on his head and embossed silver rings on his fingers. Behind him stood a slave holding a coloured umbrella, and around him were grouped his courtiers and elders.

He received the conquerors standing; then made three deep bows, each time touching his forehead and breast, and greeting them incongruously with the ritualistic words, "Peace be upon you!"

"And on you be peace," replied Rivasco, settling himself on the heap of crimson carpets spread round the walls of the room.

The Mwenyi Mkuu courteously waved the other Portuguese captains to be seated on his left, then came and reclined beside Rivasco, while his own followers stood silently against the walls of the room. Coffee was brought in chased brass cups, the thick black coffee of the east, and with it goblets of drinking water.

And now, as though there had been no battle, as though bodies were not still lying in the streets and being carried away from the shore by wailing women, as though the blood of the equally brave defenders and attackers of the island town was not soaking into the sand in big, dark patches; as though these two commanders of men were friends and allies; they sat together and talked and smiled in the most amiable fashion. While the white man imposed his terms the other listened and agreed, promising away the freedom of his country for years

to come, and putting himself and his people under the protection of the King of Portugal.

The tribute demanded was not very heavy. The money was levied more as a gesture than anything else. One hundred meticals of gold, worth about £60 were to be paid annually to Portugal. Her ships must have free access to Zanzibar at any time, they must be supplied with fresh water and food; spices, cloths and precious metals; brass-work and trade-goods as needed, besides slaves and pilots. The Mwenyi Mkuu must acknowledge the King of Portugal as his Suzerain and Overlord.

Very soon the Portuguese, flushed with victory and weighed down with loot, moved on northwards. Ravasco sailed straight into Mombasa harbour and seized some dhows. The people of the Island of War, totally unprepared for this blow, watched in impotent rage. They were brave enough—indeed the Portuguese had already named the Mombassians “Cavaleros de Mombasa”, and their Melinde friends “Damas de Melinde”, “Fighting men of Mombasa” and “Ladies of Melinde”—but they were caught unawares. Helplessly their ruler made his submission to Ravasco, promised a yearly tribute and also (this must have hurt his pride more than anything else) agreed to make peace with Melinde.

After this, the people of the coast and the islands, were left in peace for a while to pursue their own vendettas, murders, marriages, and trading journeys as they always had done.

But two years later, another great fleet appeared, commanded by Francisco d’Almeida. This time there were more than twenty ships carrying fifteen hundred men. Portugal was stretching out her arms and laying her hands on all the Arab coast towns, one after another; to conquer them, discipline them, trade with them, Christianize them and establish a line of bases along the route to India. Kilwa, Sofala, Mombasa, Lamu and the beautiful little islands of Pemba, Paté and Manda, all these must be subdued and tamed into obedience.

The Portuguese planted settlements of missionaries, merchants, and men-at-arms in the various towns, increased the Mother-Country’s wealth, kept the ports open, brought to the bosom of the Church thousands of heathen souls now lost in outer darkness; and at the same time led agreeable lives in these fertile, flowery places where slaves were cheaper than in Portugal;

food cost almost nothing, and it was only a few months' journey from their native land.

The Sultan of Kilwa, having seen nothing of the Portuguese since the departure of da Gama over three years ago, had not unnaturally let the payment of tribute lapse. Perhaps he thought the white men would not return, that they were busy elsewhere, or that they had simply forgotten. So it was a painful surprise when one day a big fleet was observed approaching and, as they came nearer, the Sultan saw to his horror—not the lofty pointed sails of Arab dhows, but the purposeful-looking square sails of the Christians.

Sultan Ibrahim sent for his counsellors in great haste. Pale Arabs and black Swahilis clustered around him. As the ships came nearer they all chattered together, flustered and frightened, each suggesting his own plan. The Sultan thought sadly of the unpaid tribute; he remembered Mozambique, shattered by that terrible lion of the sea, da Gama. He thought of the sack of Mombasa and the recent attack on Zanzibar, and what had happened to Kilwa itself, as a direct result of which he had agreed to pay the tribute.

He remembered all these things, and his heart turned to water. He was not a very brave or clever man. He seized a few treasures, bundled them on to the heads of his favourite slaves and fled into the bush.

His subjects, unaware of the departure of their sovereign and protector, continued to gaze at the huge fleet bearing down on them. They saw scores of boats, filled with armed men chanting war songs (they were really hymns) leave the ships and rapidly approach the shore. They looked for their Sultan, his captains and his soldiers, who should have been gathered among the palm trees and clustered on the flat roof-tops—but they were nowhere to be seen.

Then like a bush fire, word flashed through the crowds—"Sultan Ibrahim has gone! There is no one to save us!" The people melted away; men, women and children departed inland, leaving behind all they possessed—for the white men were close upon them. They vanished into the wilderness behind the town, where bushes gave way to forest trees, where elephant and rhinocerus, buffalo and lion roamed, and the long grass hummed with mosquitoes.

D'Almeida's singing soldiers entered the town unopposed. The ancient buildings and narrow streets awaited them in strange silence. Masterless camels and donkeys stood where they had been abandoned, munching the loads of millet and grass which had fallen off their backs. Expecting an ambush, d'Almeida held back his troops and sent out scouts. The soldiers, thinking of the wonderful riches stored inside the empty buildings—for Kilwa was known as the Master of the gold trade—were impatient to start looting. Then d'Almeida's scouts returned; Kilwa, in truth, was deserted, and all her treasures were there for the taking.

The commander waved his men on. No longer singing hymns, but yelling now with joy and excitement, soldiers and sailors, merchants and scribes, poured into the town, dashed into the houses, rushed up the narrow stone stairs and emerged later panting and staggering under huge loads of silks, cottons, jewels, weapons, and household treasures.

After a few days d'Almeida set about building a fort. By the time it was finished order had been restored in Kilwa, and the people had returned to their looted homes. Before d'Almeida finally left he appointed a new Sultan and established a garrison of one hundred and fifty Portuguese soldiers, together with priests, administrators and merchants, living in and near the fort, which he named Fort St. James. Then he went on to Mombasa.

II

Meanwhile, one of his lieutenants, Petro d'Anaya, had undertaken the conquest of Sofala, the town which was, after Kilwa, the most important city in the gold-trade.

Here the local Arabs were at each other's throats, and in no state to resist invasion. D'Anaya marched in, almost without firing a shot; imposed the usual terms of an annual tribute and anchorage for Portuguese ships, and did not leave until he, also, had built a strong little castle by the sea, well fortified and adequately manned.

Times had changed indeed since da Gama's three small,

battered vessels sailed slowly and painfully up this coast. Now the Portuguese came, at the best as allies, at the worst, as conquerors, powerful, haughty and domineering. The Arabs realized that these men were their masters, and most of the coastal rulers were content to pay tribute, live in peace, and keep their towns intact.

Not so Mombasa. This town of "Cavalleros", though gutted and looted by Cabral only five years before, was now rebuilt. The people were in fighting mood, and faced the invaders belligerently. D'Almeida had no wish to destroy the town; but for the safe passage of their ships, it was essential for the Portuguese either to make friends with or to subdue this defiant little island.

D'Almeida's ships approached the gap in the reef, and one of them crept forward to take soundings. No sooner was she within range than the gun on the rebuilt fort sent a cannon ball through her hull. D'Almeida, wishing to be diplomatic, withdrew his ship and sent an envoy in a small boat with an offer of terms. These were not the sort that the fighting islanders were likely to accept. The friendship and protection of the King of Portugal was graciously proffered in return for the complete submission of the Sultan of Mombasa—and, of course, a yearly tribute. The jeering crowds hushed their voices long enough for the envoy to call out his message. Then pandemonium broke out; yells and screams and shrieks of shrill African laughter rang over the water, insults and threats were hurled at the wretched men in the boat. They were forbidden to land—the last thing they wished to do in any case—and ordered back to their ship, a command which they swiftly obeyed.

The people of Mombasa were not again to be caught unawares while their town was burnt to the ground, without being able to strike a blow in her defence. They had made every possible preparation. The cannon on their fort was well supplied with ammunition. Their troops were armed and dispersed in and around the buildings near the harbour. They had bribed fifteen hundred wild black bowmen from the mainland to come and help drive off the Portuguese.

The men on the wharf danced up and down, the Africans lifting their bows above their heads and screeching; the Arabs jumping high into the air, and slashing the space beneath their

bent knees with their swords and sticks at the summit of the leap. They had worked themselves into a frenzy and were spoiling for a fight.

Perhaps d'Almeida's heart may have sunk a little as he looked at the huge odds against him, and the difficult terrain over which he must attack. But he lacked none of the courage of his countrymen, his honour was at stake, and his faith was strong.

He sailed his ships up to the jetty and his men disembarked and rushed ashore. They were met with flights of poisoned arrows, but most of the soldiers wore thick leather jerkins, which saved them. The Mombasa people and their allies fought bravely. They retreated into the maze of winding streets. From the flat roofs stones and refuse, boiling water and oil fell on the invaders' heads; spears and arrows and bullets assailed them.

Still they came on, bearing their holy banners with the crosses, doves, and pictures of the saints; their Royal flag of Portugal and their leaders' and captains' pennants. Steadily and relentlessly the white men advanced, and all the hysterical courage of the Arabs and Africans could not stay them. Hundreds of black men died fighting in a cause they did not understand, against a small force which yet was possessed of an overwhelming strength. Hundreds of Arabs and Swahilis lost their lives defending the scarlet flag of Islam, their city, homes and families, and their freedom. A great many escaped from the town, and far into the night canoes, paddled by the exhausted arms of the last of the native bowmen, crossed from the island to the mainland, where the survivors staggered into the bush and disappeared.

Then, for two days there was such a scene of pillage and looting as even those old walls had never before witnessed. Huge stores of gold, silver, amber and ivory; great mountains of jewels, clothes, materials, and weapons littered the streets; cattle, donkeys, camels and hens were driven down to the wharf, where piles of fruit and rice, spices and meat and every kind of food were already heaped, waiting to be taken off to the ships.

There was no room on board for so much booty and large quantities had to be left behind. There were also at least a

thousand prisoners, but most of these were women and children, who were set free. While they huddled together, terrified, on the wharf, soldiers ran through the town with lighted torches. Soon Mombasa was aflame from end to end. A strong wind sprang up, as though to help the Portuguese in their work of destruction. The massive wooden doors, the frail wooden lattices, the lines of flimsy little shops, the clusters of native huts built of mud and wood and palm leaves, burnt like match-boxes. Those who had survived the fighting and had hidden themselves away while their houses were being looted, ran shrieking into the streets, where many perished in the debris of crashing buildings.

The Portuguese returned to their ships, sailed through the reef by the light of the burning town, and turned northwards.

In small, fearful groups, the islanders came back to their homes. Black shells of houses; smouldering heaps of timber; charred bodies of men and animals . . . silence. . . . Nothing stirred except heaps of ashes blown by the light breeze which wandered innocently through the desolate scene, now that the cruel, destructive wind had died.

Sadly, the Sultan of Mombasa wrote to the Sultan of Melinde —with whom he was still living in the state of forced friendship imposed on him by Ravasco—that when he and his people came to their town they found “no living thing in it, neither man nor woman, young or old, nor child, however little; all who failed to make their escape had been killed or burnt. . . . Be on your guard,” he added.

But the Sultan of Melinde cared nothing for the sorrows of Mombasa. Indeed he was overjoyed at the doom which had fallen upon it. He welcomed d’Almeida with open arms; showered compliments, feasts and gifts on him and his men. He was so sincere in his delight that d’Almeida made him a present of some of the loot from Mombasa. The Sultan’s cup overflowed. . . .

D’Almeida finally tore himself away from the celebrations and continued on his journey to India, where he was to assume the high and glorious office of Viceroy of the East.

III

In 1506 another big fleet sailed from Portugal, under Afonso d'Albuquerque and the famous sailor Tristao da Cunha. They paused at Mozambique to refit and revictual their ships, and then sailed eastward to explore the beautiful island of Madagascar. They touched at various points on the coast, and made friends with the Arab Sultans, Sheikhs and merchants who controlled the little settlements; but these humble people had nothing which tempted the Portuguese. They traded spices, cloves, and slaves, bought from their local tribes, for cloths, ivory and metals. The Portuguese were not interested in the few things they had to offer, and sailed away.

They visited Kilwa, where they found everything quiet under the new Sultan, and then went on to Melinde. Here, among the only Arabs they could truly trust and call their friends, they rested and refreshed themselves.

No one can be more charming, generous and loyal than an Arab of the Azanian coast, once his friendship has been won. During the centuries of Portuguese occupation, through all the horrors, bloodshed and sieges, the people of Melinde remained the true friends of the white men—fought for them, supported them, and sorely regretted their final departure.

D'Albuquerque and Tristao da Cunha now had four more objectives before them—the towns of Lamu, Uja, Barawa, and Mogadishu.

The first of these was an enchanting white town on an island almost hidden from the open sea by the embracing arms of the mainland, thrust half round it in a protective fashion.

Day and night a light breeze blew from the Indian ocean. The women were famous for their beauty. Many of them had the willowy height and delicate features of the Somalis, combined with the apricot skin and large eyes of the Arabs, and the happy nature of the native Swahili. They were lovely creatures indeed, and some were wealthy enough to wear heavily chased silver anklets and armlets, turquoise-studded silver ear-rings, and richly-coloured silk *kikois* under their all-enveloping black outer garment. The ladies of quality walked abroad under small portable tents, which completely hid them, and out of which

they could only see through a slit where the flaps met in front. These were carried by slave girls, who enjoyed a happy freedom from the conventions with which their well-bred owners were enchain'd.

The harbour of Lamu was often full of dhows. Tall-masted ships of a hundred tons and more sailed from Oman on the north-east monsoon, bringing hordes of savage Muscat Arabs. Wild elf-locks hung from under their turbans, black eyes glittered in their thin, hard faces; bred between the desert and the sea, they were terrible fighters and wonderful sailors.

Heavy, Indian vessels, come from the east to trade with the African ports, lay rocking on the water. Hosts of little fishing-boats sped in and out of the harbour. When craft from Pâté and the other islands approached the shore, their passengers sang and laughed, clapped their hands and blew conch shells, for such was the custom.

Lamu welcomed the white men. It was a happy place, and they must have been thankful that here, at least, there was no fighting or bloodshed—but smiling hospitality and entertainments in the houses of rich Arabs, where Barjun girls danced for them to weird native music.

The Sultan at once agreed to pay the tribute of six hundred meticals (about £360) yearly. As a centre of the slave trade with Persia and Arabia, Lamu was rich, and the first port of call for dhow-masters who traded salt and carpets for the treasures of Africa. The yearly tribute was a small sum to pay in return for the protection and friendship of the mighty King of Portugal

IV

The next place to be visited was the little town of Oja, on the edge of the desolate Somali country. Here the people were very different from the comfort-loving Arabs and primitive natives whom the Portuguese had so far encountered.

They were tall, very dark and very good-looking, perhaps the handsomest coloured race in the world. Their features were delicate, regular, and completely un-negroid. The young girls wore their hair in long, black curls reaching to the shoulders, whilst the married womens' heads were bound with black

net. Their bright-coloured, full skirts swayed as they walked, so that a bevy of Somali women looked like a fleet of stately sailing ships. Fanatical Moslems, men and women alike were proud and fierce, without compassion or self-pity.

The Portuguese knew nothing of the fighting qualities of these new enemies. Oja was a small place and could only summon a handful of men for its defence. But these few were angry and defiant, refusing allegiance to any but the Caliph of Egypt.

They made their brave gesture of loyalty and paid for it, for Oja was stormed, looted, and burnt to the ground.

Their fighting spirit thus pleasantly aroused, the Portuguese continued on their way.

At Barawa they were faced by an army of six thousand furious Somalis, armed with spears and bows and arrows. They were an intimidating sight as they threw their spears in the air, shouting defiance.

The Portuguese were heavily outnumbered, but, calling on God and their favourite saints, they attacked the yelling mob. Very slowly, fighting bitterly, the white men forced the Somalis to give ground. When at last the battle was over, forty Portuguese had fallen and sixty were wounded, but hundreds of black men lay dead and dying, and the remainder had fled into the scrub.

The Portuguese looted the town, but were disappointed with their spoils. Unlike the Arabs, the Somalis were a hardy and frugal race, living in a clean-cut poverty. The amber necklaces and many petticoats worn by the women were all the signs of wealth they displayed. Flocks of camels and thin, black-headed sheep were their only means of livelihood. The Portuguese ruefully contemplated the fruits of their hard-won victory —a few cloths, some amber beads, and the stragglers from the fleeing herds of livestock. They vented their rage on the town, and Barawa, like Oja and Mombasa, was left a blackened ruin.

A few days' journey north of Barawa lay the important city of Mogadishu. This was a strong place, the chief town on the coast of the Somali nation. By now the Portuguese had learned the difference between their present opponents and the more easily mastered inhabitants of the coast farther south. The Somalis were a desert people, as hard as their own arid country.

From the approaching ships the Portuguese saw a town of

white houses. The shallow waters lapping Mogadishu were in themselves a defence, since no large vessel could approach, and the only way to land was to row ashore in small boats.

Thousands of warriors thronged the beach, screaming on a high, hysterical note which boded ill for the strangers. Da Cunha watched them from a distance and at last decided to send a Somali whom he had captured at Barawa, to talk with them in their own language. The wretched man must have known he was doomed, but resistance and protests were useless. He was bundled into a boat and rowed to within wading distance of the shore, where he was forced to get out and advance towards the maddened mob. He stumbled through the shallow water with his hands held out beseechingly before him, calling for peace to be upon them, calling on the name of Allah.

Some warriors rushed into the surf and dragged him out. They threw him on the sand, their knives flashed and fell, and in a few seconds all that was left of da Cunha's messenger was a mutilated corpse, bleeding from a hundred wounds.

Clearly the Portuguese could not successfully attack such vastly superior numbers, so they weighed anchor and withdrew; whilst the Somalis, baulked of their blood-letting, danced themselves into a frenzy, yelling every curse in heaven and hell upon their departing enemies.

The northernmost point of d'Albuquerque and da Cunha's journey was the little island of Socotra, held by a colony of Arabs from the rocky country of Southern Arabia. These wild people, though few in number, put up a stubborn fight, and startled the Portuguese by their desperate resistance. However, after the humiliation they had suffered at Mogadishu, it was out of the question for them to turn south without making one more conquest. The defenders of Socotra were driven from the shore into the narrow streets, and through the little town, until there was nothing at their backs but the sea. Then the survivors surrendered.

The Portuguese stayed a while, consolidating their gains. They arranged a yearly tribute, and built a strong fort to protect Socotra from other invaders, and to form a naval base whence vessels could patrol the sea-route to India. Then, leaving a small garrison in charge, the fleet sailed.

The year was 1507.

CHAPTER FIVE

1508-1562

I

LESS than ten years after da Gama had made his first great journey, the whole East African coast, from Sofala to Lamu, was under the rule of the Portuguese, and every port was paying them tribute. The people seemed quite resigned to their new situation. Only Mombasa continued to give trouble.

In order to make their lines of communication entirely safe, the Portuguese had to subdue Muscat and Ormuz, and break, once for all, the power of the Northern Arabs in the Azanian and Indian Oceans. To attack these two strongholds was like putting one's hand into a hornet's nest. But it was unthinkable to keep the Portuguese fleets with their precious cargoes perpetually at the mercy of marauding Arabian dhows, manned as they were by pirates and cut-throats, all of them brave as tigers and greedy as vultures.

D'Albuquerque volunteered for the task. The memory of his set-back at Mogadishu still rankled, and he felt the need to vindicate his honour. He was a great fighter, and a great leader of men; nicknamed "the Portuguese Mars". He attacked Muscat with all the forces at his disposal, and finally captured the town, sacked it and burnt it. The island of Ormuz, held by the Persians, was also taken. Now it seemed to him that there was no longer any enemy to hinder the Portuguese fleets on their way to India. But the Arabs were not beaten yet. They called on their fellow Moslems, the Egyptians and the Persians, for help. The three countries united their ships, men and weapons together, and sailed south from Aden to hurl their massed strength against the Christians.

D'Albuquerque met them off Diu, on the coast of India, and a great sea battle followed. Once again, though greatly outnumbered, the white men's superior strategy and weapons gave them victory. The blue sea was soon alight with burning dhows, and dotted with the struggling figures of drowning men.

The fleets of the three nations were utterly destroyed and the Portuguese at last were undisputed masters of the ocean.

D'Albuquerque then attacked Aden. This powerful port, however, was too strong and he had to withdraw. But he felt that he had served his sovereign well, and that it would only be just that he should receive the Viceroyalty of the Indian territories. His wish was granted, but when he arrived off the Malabar Coast with his credentials, the ruling Viceroy, d'Almeida, cast him into prison. Three months later d'Almeida was sent home and d'Albuquerque became Viceroy.

Despite all he had done for Portugal, King Manuel in the end betrayed the new Viceroy and ordered him to hand over authority to his greatest enemy, Soarez. This blow broke his heart and he died at sea in 1515.

His last letter to the King contained a dignified and touching account of his conquests and services—"I leave the chief places in India to your Majesty's power," he said, "the only thing left to be done being the closing of the gates of the Strait." He begged the King to care for his children.

Meanwhile, Mozambique was being settled. Besides an immensely strong fortress on the edge of the sea, houses were built for the garrison, administrators and merchants; also a church and a hospital. Mozambique soon became the most important town on this part of the coast, taking trade and people away from Sofala and Kilwa until these two old cities dwindled to the status of villages and their walls crumbled.

II

This was Portugal's heroic age. From that tiny country, wedged between a powerful, envious neighbour, and the Atlantic Ocean, there sprang men possessed of such courage and enterprise that they were able to take possession of the vast new territories of Brazil, East Africa, Oman, and the West Coast of India; and to hold and administer them, despite unending difficulties. The Portuguese Empire was founded on the daring and determination of a few pioneers.

Priests and merchants thronged in their footsteps, adding

to the power of her Church and the riches of her treasury, and bringing many benefits to the conquered countries. When there was famine or disease the Portuguese officials did what they could to alleviate the peoples' sufferings; partly, no doubt, for their own sakes, but partly because it was good policy to have their natives healthy and well-fed.

They were stern in their rules for shipping and trading, especially in the matter of gold from the Zambesi country. All ships sailing between India and East Africa must be Portuguese, or under their control; all trade must be done by them or by their accredited representatives. Gold must be bought by Portuguese officials straight from the natives, and must not pass through the greedy hands of Arab or Swahili middle-men.

The Slave Trade flourished. Linschoten, the Dutch traveller and writer, sailing with the Portuguese in the sixteenth century said of the Negroes:

From Mozambique great numbers of Caffres are carried into India, and many times they sell a man or woman that is grown to her full strength for two or three ducats.

He also wrote an account of an industrious elephant which he observed on one of his journeys:

At such time as I was to make my voyage from Cochin to Portugal, the rudder of our ship was out of order so that it must of force be brought on land to make it fit again, and so it was drawn to the river-side at the stern of the boat, which the Elephant should draw on land upon two boards that it might slide up, and because it was heavy . . . and also that the Elephant was as yet but young, and not grown to his full strength, so that he could not draw it out alone, yet he did the best he could; but seeing he could not do it, he fell on his forelegs and began to cry and weep, that the tears ran out of his eyes, and because many of us stood upon the shore to behold this sight, the keeper began to chide him, and with hard words to curse him, because he shamed him thus in the presence of so many men, but what strength or labour whatever the Elephant used, he could not do it alone, but when they brought another Elephant to lift him, they both

together drew it half out of the water, so that it lay partly upon the boards. The first Elephant perceiving that, with his head and teeth, thrust the other Elephant away, and would have no more help but drew it out himself: whereby it may be considered that they are in understanding and desire of commendation like unto men.

North of the three fortified towns, Mozambique, Sofala and Kilwa, there were little groups of Portuguese colonists: merchants and farmers living in the country districts, without benefit of garrison or ships of war. These country people got on well with their coloured neighbours, and traded and farmed with them in quiet, peaceful little communities. At that time Portuguese women were not given to emigration, so that there were many marriages and alliances between the white men and the Arab and native girls, all of which helped to bring the three races together. To these remote places the Portuguese brought prosperity and happiness.

About five hours' sail from Lamu is the lonely little island of Paté. Thick bush covers the interior and runs down to the shore, where the pale sand, marked only by the spoor of sea-birds' feet, and of the fast-moving crabs, is washed by the flower-coloured sea. Just back from the water stands the town of Paté. Here some Portuguese immigrants settled, living in great content among the islanders. They taught them to blast wells, thus obtaining a water-supply which did not depend on the precarious rains. They built good houses of coral, founded on rocks, and in this the natives copied them. They said to the ruler, Sultan Abubakr:

“You are master of a fine and fertile island, and many people come from far away to visit you and to trade. But where are your profits? You should build a customs house and charge a levy on goods coming here.” So a customs house was built at a place named by the natives “Fandikani”, which was their way of pronouncing the Portuguese word for customs.

Abubakr was succeeded by Bwana Mkuu; he was already rich, and under his rule and the influence of the Portuguese, the island's wealth increased and the standard of living rose. The soil grew many kinds of food, and for livestock there were goats, cattle, sheep, and chickens. There was always plenty

to eat, and wherever there are palm trees, there is something to drink. At their very tops Nature has put a small supply of mildly alcoholic juice, and, though it is against his religion for a Moslem to drink wine, this sweet, insipid liquid does not rank as such. Indeed, human beings are not the only creatures to enjoy it. Sometimes at the foot of the trees can be found, dead drunk and fast asleep, those enchanting little animals, part monkey, part mongoose, called bush-babies.

In time the Portuguese and islanders of Paté became luxurious in their mode of living. They built larger houses and lighted them with brass lamps. They climbed up silver ladders to their high beds. They wore silver chains round their necks and anklets, ear-rings, and bracelets of gold and silver, often studded with semi-precious stones. They even adorned the pillars of their houses with gold- and silver-headed nails.

They often sailed to Lamu, to visit their Portuguese and Arab friends, and watch the graceful Barjun dancing girls at evening entertainments, or the wild sword dances performed in the square of the mosque by sailors from the Muscat dhows.

They made a wide, paved road from the harbour to Paté town, and drove an underground tunnel from Paté across the island to Siu. When they died they were buried in ornate tombs, near those of their Moslem friends. For many years the two races lived happily side by side. Then politics began to spoil this friendship, and finally the Portuguese had to go.

Today the people of Paté say, "The Portuguese were good people, they loved us. We did not send them away; they went freely." This may not be quite true, but it is a fact that while the Portuguese lived there Paté flourished, but after they left, it became forlorn and dilapidated. Without the enterprise and initiative of white people to encourage them, the natives could not be bothered to grow more food than was necessary to keep body and soul together, or to keep the wells clean, or to tend their livestock. Now there are hardly any animals left. The bush climbs over the crumbled walls of the town; the fine paved way is deep in sand, and the entrance to the tunnel is just a large, dark cave, full of bats.



By Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum

An early seventeenth-century engraving of Muscate.



Sailing at Sunset.

Photograph by Fergus Wils

III

On the island of Pemba, off Zanzibar, the Portuguese also left their mark. Pemba was from ancient times an important place, and, among other things, it contained the best-known university of witch-craft on the east coast. From Pemba, professors in this "science" travelled to Zanzibar and the coast towns, instructing their pupils in the art of white and black magic—the one to cure, the other to kill.

The magicians of Pemba belonged to various guilds; entry was obtained by the sacrifice of a goat, or sometimes a child. The purchase price was subsequently eaten. In many cases the members of the guild brought their own sons for sacrifice. Should some reluctant father fail to follow this time-honoured custom, a messenger arrived outside his hut, and sang the following song:

Open Muamu! You know who is waiting!
 I am sure that you hear me, Keep your promise, Muamu!
 Come to the feast, nor let yourself sleep,
 For tonight is your night.
 Remember, Muamu! how large is your portion,
 Of other men's sons you have eaten your share,
 Your son for tonight.
 So come to the feast, nor let yourself sleep,
 For tonight is your night.

Pemba island was also devil-haunted. They lived in holes in the ground by day, and lurked in trees at night, ready to drop down on and destroy the unwary traveller. They could be summoned during dances by the initiated.

These performers moved slowly about in a monotonous figure until they were almost in a coma. After awhile, drugged by the endless rhythm and the unchanging pattern of their steps, they fell down in a trance, and the devils then entered into their bodies, welcomed by the onlookers with shrill, whinnying cries.

The women learnt their witchcraft together with the men, and shared in their customs and feasts. Another ancient song recalls the lament of a mother for her dead child, and her chagrin during the feast.

The thing that I have done has put great sorrow in my heart,

I thought you would have given me much more honour,
And made me welcome to the great place.

You all received more honour than I did, in the flesh of
my son,

And you have given me only this small piece of meat.

I have no desires in my sorrow.

My son is killed as though he were a spider.

Now his flesh is all eaten,

And I have only a small bone, and a small piece of the
spleen.

To these people the Portuguese tried to bring Christianity. Some of their rulers were converted, but it was often at the expense of their thrones, for the witch-doctors of Pemba were a strong community, and jealously resisted any alien faith which might sap their authority. They usually succeeded in frightening the simple-minded, superstitious people into driving the Christian Sultans away from the island.

But there was one custom introduced by the white settlers which made a great impression on the Pemba people; and this was bullfighting. Never before had the islanders seen such a strange sight. Here were men on foot, armed only with darts or a short sword, in the same enclosure as an angry bull! They then proceeded to infuriate the animal still further by flapping red cloths in its face, until it charged, when they stepped neatly out of the way at the last moment.

The black people took up the sport themselves, and to the best of their ability imitated the whites. After the Portuguese had gone, bull-fighting was continued in Pemba and still takes place there. The ring consists of an open space in a glade of trees. At one end of the arena is a large bull-proof cage, in which sit the women and children. The bulls are lethargic creatures and far from dangerous. To make assurance doubly sure, they are tethered on long ropes so that, even when provoked into a half-hearted charge, no one can be hurt. This sport and some ruined tombs, are the only remaining memorial to the Portuguese occupation of three hundred years ago.

In the country places the Portuguese settlers lived contentedly, at peace with their neighbours and in sympathy with

their labour. They were never very rich, but existed comfortably on the produce of their land and the fruits of their trading. In the towns, however, they became prosperous and important, conscious of the responsibilities of their position and wealth, and in constant rivalry with the Arab and Indian merchants. They were hated by those whom they had displaced and whose trade they had taken, and they always had to shelter under the protection of their armed forces, and to live with the menace of danger from a hostile, sharp-witted population, constantly hanging over them.

In the south, the white people were in full control, but in the north the local Sultans and Sheikhs and merchants were encouraged to continue living in their towns and their homes, ruling and trading almost as before, but under strict Portuguese supervision, and in competition with them.

These southern settlers made one mistake which counted heavily against them in the eyes of Lisbon. Before the coming of the white men, the Arabs had sent their caravans far into the interior, collecting slaves and gold, and trading calico and beads for tusks and the precious rhino horn which, ground to powder, was said to make the finest aphrodisiac in the world. The Portuguese could not spare troops to escort trading parties far inland, and it was against their policy to employ travelling Arab merchants, whom—probably quite rightly—they did not trust.

They expected the natives of the interior to come to the coast, with slaves and gold for sale, as happened in West Africa. It never occurred to the eastern Bantu to make the long, difficult journey to the sea, in the interests of trade. They were incapable of the organization and had not the courage needed for such an undertaking. They stayed inland, and the gold trade dropped accordingly. It was said that under the Arab régime about £600,000 worth of gold passed through Sofala yearly, whereas when the Portuguese ruled the export fell to £4,000. These figures may be exaggerated, but it was certainly true that the Portuguese conquest of the coast, though a success as far as the safe passage of their ships went; was disappointing from a financial point of view:

Lisbon was not pleased.

IV

In 1542, when he was over 60, Vasco da Gama, set forth once more on what was to be his last journey. For many years he had lived as a great landlord in Portugal, rich, revered and consulted about affairs of state and of empire. But he had not been sent on any more journeys of discovery. Perhaps King Manuel feared he might earn himself a dukedom if he was shown more worlds to conquer, and regarded with apprehension the prospect of having to find him the land and the money to go with such an honour.

By 1542 Manuel was dead and his son John III was reigning when da Gama set sail. Since his first voyage, some of the men sent to govern the East had been weak and corrupt. The people had suffered, there had been much unrest. Da Gama went to India as Viceroy, in order to restore Portugal's prestige: an honourable position which he was well able to fill.

As he sailed along the shores he had followed more than twenty years before, and saw the Portuguese buildings, the Portuguese soldiers and merchants and farmers, and the Portuguese flags flying gaily over places where he had so often nearly met his death, his heart was lifted up with thankfulness and joy. This journey was probably the happiest of his life; in this year, his last on earth, he saw the fruits of the courage and enterprise he had displayed so long ago.

At Melinde he received a royal welcome. His old friend the Sultan was dead, but da Gama's name was "big" with the Arabs, his was a legend which had lost nothing in the telling, and they did all they could to honour and please him.

He sailed on to India and there found matters in a bad state. He eagerly put through a number of reforms, showing all his old fire and firmness. His work brought him great happiness.

Late in the year he went to Cochin. Christmas was approaching. Vasco and his sailors and soldiers were prepared to celebrate it as exiles do, feeling all the more deeply the peace and promise of the Nativity story, because of the distance that separated them from their homes and families. But Vasco suddenly fell ill. He was old, and the climate had broken down his resistance. In the Franciscan Monastery they nursed him and prayed

over him. But "God was calling him", and he died. The monks buried him in their church. Fourteen years later his body was removed to Portugal, and given a magnificent state funeral in the town of Vidigueria, whose title of count, da Gama had been so proud to bear.

V

Meanwhile, on the East coast of Africa the work of colonization went on. Although not numerically very strong, the Portuguese managed to maintain law and order.

The thorn in their flesh was Mombasa. This turbulent island, unable to forget the days of her glory when all the coast towns from Zanzibar to Lamu trembled before her, could not bring herself to submit to the white men. In 1528, the people of the Island of War were again in open rebellion. They attacked Melinde and gave that loyal friend of Portugal a severe beating.

Nuno da Cunha sailed to Mombasa in an avenging mood, his strong force augmented by one hundred and fifty fighting men from Melinde, and the most modern weapons with which Portugal could supply him. Once more Mombasa sought help from the mainland. Six thousand Wa-nyika and other tribesmen came over, armed with bows and poisoned arrows, spears and swords, and the small throwing clubs called *rungu*. This strong force should have been able to defeat the Portuguese, and had they been Somalis or Northern Arabs they probably would have. But the black bowmen from the mainland were more noisy than brave, and after a hard fight Nuno da Cunha and his Melinde allies drove them out of the town and into the bush. Once more Mombasa was the scene of looting, rape and murder, as the Portuguese avenged their dead and helped themselves to the treasures of the wealthy city.

They were now masters of Mombasa town, but the Swahili and the tribesmen continued to harry them from the bush, where they remained hidden. Da Cunha's men were too few to permit him to sweep the island clean of his enemies, who perpetually darted forth to murder sentries and stragglers; or crept through the dark streets at night leaving behind them a few dead bodies to mark their trail.

Da Cunha sent to Melinde for help, and this time the Sultan despatched to him five hundred picked men, commanded by his own nephew. Now the island could be cleared. The Portuguese and their reinforcements swept through the bush. The surprised tribesmen fled: they rushed to the beach, jumped into their canoes and paddled furiously across to the mainland, where they vanished into the jungle. Many failed to escape, but were shot down on the shore, while others in desperation flung themselves, though they could not swim, into the sea. There the sharks seized them.

For the present there was no more trouble from the tribesmen, but those islanders who had taken refuge on the mainland still refused to give in. Frequently small parties crossed over and did what damage they could to the Portuguese garrison. Nunho's forces were unable to guard the whole island. Zanzibar, Pemba, and the other coast and island towns, thankful at being delivered from the threat of Mombasa, sent him fine presents. But they did not send men and arms, which were what he really needed.

He knew that only by force would he achieve any form of peace in Mombasa, so he sent a message to the Sultan saying that if the guerilla fighting and the murdering did not stop, he would burn down the coconut trees.

This was a terrible threat, for the palm trees were by far the greatest source of wealth for the island. Many of them were owned by individuals; sometimes a single plantation would belong to several hundred people. If these were destroyed their owners would have nothing left. Faced with the possibility of this disaster, the Sultan of Mombasa came to terms. He agreed to pay a large fine, and to send a yearly tribute to Portugal. Nunho arranged an interview, and the Sultan came into the town to sign the treaty. Great was his surprise to find, not a powerful Portuguese garrison, but a handful of sick men, prostrated by the climate and the strange new diseases—malaria, dysentery, elephantiasis and typhoid—which had attacked them from they knew not what causes. A great many had already died, and Nunho had only a small and weakened company with which to enforce his demands.

The Sultan believed that if he could procrastinate long enough, the Portuguese would either all die or go away. Then

Mombasa would be free again, and he could save his gold. He forgot that out of Portugal came ever more and more fleets, each with more modern weapons than the last, and carrying men with all the determination, courage, and persistence of their predecessors.

So he talked and temporized. Then Nunho, perfectly understanding the situation, listened to the advice of his few remaining soldiers, and one windy day set fire to Mombasa. The devastation was even more complete than before, as Nunho sailed away from the burning town. He paused at Melinde to rest and refit, leaving twenty-four men there to help the Sultan in case of another attack by Mombasa. Then he went on to Goa, where he became Viceroy of India.

As soon as the Portuguese had gone, the indomitable people of Mombasa began to rebuild their town. They gave no more trouble for some years, and the Portuguese were able to concentrate on their settlements, their fleets and their gold trade; but the latter yielded such poor results, now that Arab caravans no longer travelled into the interior, that the Portuguese decided, since the natives had not brought them any gold, to go and fetch it for themselves.

VI

About 1531 a small trading-post was established at Senna, a short way up the Zambesi, and from here the Portuguese advanced slowly and carefully up-country. These tentative moves towards the gold-fields resulted in a slight increase in the flow of gold. The natives were highly amused at the trouble the strange white men took, at the diseases they endured and the dangers they faced—all to bring them bright cotton stuffs and beautiful glass beads in return for such common and easily obtainable things as stones out of the ground, teeth out of the elephants and horns from the rhinos.

Forty years later Francisco Baretto led a force of one thousand men far up the Zambesi, to the Manika district. During the journey he learnt that the lieutenant whom he had left in charge at Mozambique was intriguing against him, so he returned hot-foot to defend himself. When all was in order he went back

up the big river, but only reached Senna, where he died. Vasco Homem then took charge of the expedition, but his force was soon so decimated by disease that he had to return to Mozambique to refit. Undaunted, he started again, and succeeded in reaching some small mines, but found, to his bitter disappointment, that he could not work them. He returned to the coast, leaving behind him two hundred men to guard the precious mines. Soon after he had gone these hapless ones were ambushed and murdered by the natives.

The priests and missionaries were more successful. In 1560 a party of Jesuits travelled along the Zambesi, beyond the Manika country, till they reached the town of the paramount chief of the Makalanga, nearly a thousand miles inland. The chief was so surprised to see them and so impressed with their courage and faith, that he became a Christian.

The jealous witch-doctors worked on the minds of the people until the villagers were in a frenzy. They attacked the priests and killed their leader, Gonzalo de Silveira. Things rapidly became more difficult and dangerous for the missionaries. Two years after they had triumphantly baptized the chief, they were obliged to abandon their mission and their hard-won converts, and sadly return to the coast. Later on, Dominicans followed in the Jesuits' footsteps. To all these brave and devoted men the highest reward was a crown of martyrdom. Many of them found their crowns, but for all their courage and eloquence they made little impression on the natives. The black-skinned people were facile in their emotions, excitable and easily led; but, as many missionaries and administrators found to their sorrow, their feelings did not go very deep, and what seemed a sincere state of mind usually proved to be nothing more than the mood of the moment. Without ceaseless supervision they invariably slipped back into their own easy-going ways.

The Portuguese left no mark on the interior of Africa, only along the coast did they settle and rule and trade, exporting ivory, gold and slaves; and from Sofala garnets, iron-ore, and the oil stone.

Though Mombasa and the other towns were now quiescent, they made uneasy neighbours for the Portuguese. They had to be garrisoned, policed and watched. There was always an under-current of ill-feeling between white and coloured in the towns,

though not in the country places. Very often the old Portuguese chroniclers mention the intractability of the rulers of the cities, while at the same time dwelling on the riches of the inhabitants. Of Quiloa, Duarte Barbosa wrote:

There is much good in this town, because all the ships which go to Sofala touch at this island, both in going and coming back. These people are Moors of a dusky colour, and some of them are black and some are white; they are very well dressed with rich cloths of gold and silk and cotton, the women also very well dressed out with much gold and silver in chains and bracelets on their arms and legs and ears.

This King, for his great pride, and for not being willing to obey the King of Portugal, had this town taken from him by force, and in it they killed and captured many people, and the King fled.

And of Mombasa:

It is a town of great trade in goods, and has a good port, where there are always many ships. It is a country well supplied with plenty of provisions, very fine sheep, which have round tails, and many cows, chickens, and very large goats, much rice and millet and plenty of oranges, sweet and bitter, and lemons, cedrats, pomegranates, Indian figs, and all sorts of vegetables, and very good water. The inhabitants at times are at war with the people of the continent, and at other times at peace, and trade with them and obtain much honey and wax and ivory. This king, for his pride and unwillingness to obey the King of Portugal, lost his city and the Portuguese took it from him by force, and the king fled, and they killed and made captives many of his people, and the country was ravaged, and much plunder was carried off from it of gold and silver, copper, ivory, rich stuffs of gold and silk, and much other valuable merchandise.

And of Paté:

After passing Melinde, and going towards India, they cross the Gulf (because the coast trends inwards) towards the Red Sea and on the coast there is a town called Paté, and further on there is another town of the Moors, called

Lamon; all these trade with the gentiles of the country, and they are strongly-walled towns of stone and whitewash, because at times they have to fight with the gentiles, who live in the interior of the country.

And of Brava:

Leaving these places, further along the coast is a town of the Moors, well walled and built of good houses of stone and whitewash, which is called Brava. It has not got a king; it is governed by its elders, they being honoured and respectable persons. It is a place of trade, which has already been destroyed by the Portuguese, with great slaughter of inhabitants, of whom many were made captives.

But of Melinde, the faithful and beloved, he wrote:

There is a very handsome town on the mainland on the beach, called Melinde . . . And this town has fine houses of stone and whitewash, of several stories, with their windows and their terraces, and good streets. This king and people have always been very friendly and obedient to the King of Portugal, and the Portuguese have always met with much friendship and good reception amongst them.

CHAPTER SIX

THE TRAGIC HISTORY OF THE SEA

1552

I

SOMETIMES the Portuguese pioneers were accompanied by their ladies who, delicately nurtured though they were, yet had courage and endurance to match their men's. They went with them everywhere, and not a few met tragic ends. The story of the wreck and loss of the *San Joao* as related by the ship's boatswain, Alvaro Fernandes, in 1554, is a tribute to the bravery of a noble Portuguese lady, and to her devotion to her husband.

The *San Joao* left Cochin on 3 February, 1552, carrying about 7,500 lbs of pepper, and a large, heavy cargo of gold, silver and cloth. The ship was a galleon, "very big and long", but her sails were old and worn. Besides her cargo she carried over six hundred people, including women and children.

They made fairly good going until 11 May, when they ran into bad weather and strong head-winds off the coast of Natal. Almost at once the galleon lost some of her sails and the heavy seas pounded her until it seemed she must break up.

In the middle of the storm the ship's carpenter discovered that three of the pintles from the rudder were missing. He communicated his discovery to the master, Christovao Fernandes da Cunha, nicknamed the "Pigmy", but they both decided to keep the knowledge to themselves, and not even to tell their Captain, Manoel de Sousa Sepulveda, in order not to spread alarm.

After three days of violent weather, with most of the sails gone and the ship no longer answering to the helm, a sudden, stronger wind sprang up which ripped the mainsail from its yard. As they tried to save the foresail, three huge seas struck them, tearing away the rigging on the larboard side. Their shrouds

had gone, so they tried to carry out repairs from odd pieces of rope. But by this time the sea was so wild and the wind so strong, that they could barely keep on their feet. They were endeavouring to cut down the useless mainmast when the ship gave a violent lurch, and the mast suddenly broke and was tossed into the sea by the gale. They managed to cut away the torn rigging which was blowing about dangerously, and the wind carried the whole lot overboard.

Now they had no masts, yards or sails—yet they still tried to work their ship. A small mast was made from the stump of the old one, to which they fastened a piece of spar for a storm sail. They furnished this from odd scraps of sail, but their materials were so old and so rotten that they could not, in their hearts, have expected much success, despite their efforts.

When all was ready, they hoisted their patched canvas. With the helm useless, they had to steer with the sheets, and even so the ship only made leeway. Then came another great gust of wind which tore away the sails they had just made as though they were of paper. They tried to sail the ship on the foresail only, but she lurched so badly that she was practically unmanageable. The helm was struck by a great wave which smashed the rotted timbers and carried half of them away.

“So we see,” says the chronicler, “that great care should be taken with the helms and sails of ships because of the many great trials which are to be met when sailing along this route.”

The Captain, Manoel de Sousa, suffered intense anxiety for his wife and three small children (the eldest of whom was a bastard), for the other women and children on board, for the crew, the precious cargo, worth over a thousand pieces of gold, and for the ship herself.

Soon they had to cut away the foremast, which, under the pounding of the sea, was tearing the vessel open. Another big wave washed over the ship and removed what was left of the foremast. In its fall it struck the bowsprit, knocked it off its block and cast most of it inside the ship. Thus they suddenly found themselves with the wherewithal to make still another mast. This they started to do, while some of the ship’s company built a new helm, and others began to fashion sails from material carried as merchandise. Battered by the high seas and the tempest,

they worked the ship as best they might for ten more days, while the new mast, sails and helm were being finished.

But to the shame and despair of the carpenters, they found, when they tried to fit the helm, that it was too narrow and too short and was, in fact, quite useless.

They were now within sight of land, and their only thought was to reach the shore. Hoisting the mast made from the smashed bowsprit, setting their sails made from the rolls of cloth, they fought their way towards the land, praying to God to save them. "She was all split open, and it was only by the miraculous help of God that she still kept afloat."

As they approached the shore "amidst the noise of wind and sea", they held a council. It was decided to send out a small boat, whose crew must try to find as safe a spot as possible for the ship to run ashore. They could only steer by lengthening on one side the sheets which held their decorative and quite useful sails; and shortening them on the other. While they progressed precariously forward, the small boat returned with the news that they had found one beach on which they could land, if they could only get near enough. All the rest of the shore, as far as they could see in either direction, was nothing but high cliffs and jutting rocks, on which they would certainly lose their lives if the ship were to strike them.

Manoel de Sousa, Dona Leonora his wife, and the children with some twenty men, made their way safely ashore in the small boat, and there started to collect fuel and to build a fire to comfort and warm themselves and their fellow-sufferers. They had with them some arms and stores. The little boat returned to the ship and again set forth for the shore; but this time she capsized, and all on board were drowned.

Now those left in the fast disintegrating galleon began to make for the beach as best they could. The pilot had the long-boat launched, though it was doubtful if she would ever be able to fight her way through the big seas. Nevertheless, he and several people embarked, taking with them the master, who was an old man, and whose nerve had failed.

The long-boat broke up, but by some miracle all the forty persons on board reached shore alive, though badly bruised, and almost dead from exhaustion.

II

Manoel de Sousa went along the beach comforting his people and helping them towards the fire which his wife kept blazing. There were still five hundred people in the *San Joao*, of whom two hundred were Portuguese, and the rest slaves. The poor ship, pounding constantly against the beach, soon broke in half and these two halves rapidly broke again.

The cargo floated out; boxes and spars littered the sea, with people clinging desperately to them. Over forty Portuguese and seventy slaves flung themselves from the ships into the boiling waters, and perished. The rest struggled ashore, some on their strange craft; others rolled over and over by the waves. Often those already saved rushed into the sea and staggered back to safety with a half-dead companion in their arms. Many were torn by nails, crushed by falling timbers, or had their limbs broken by the force of the waves. When all who could be saved had reached the shore, they sat miserably round the fires watching their ship break up.

Four hours after the *San Joao* first hit the land, she was smashed to bits—"not even a piece as long as two feet was to be found".

For some days the wounded and weary survivors stayed where they were, hardly able to move or think. They had hoped to build a caravel to carry them to Mozambique when the storm had blown itself out. But this was now out of the question, for there was not enough timber left with which to build a boat. So for twelve days they rested, nursed the sick and tried to recover their strength. During that time they had visitors. Nine "Caffres" appeared on a hill, a little way off, and stood like statues, staring in amazement. Then they vanished, without speaking to the Portuguese or approaching their camp. A little later one Portuguese and one slave set forth, hoping to find natives who might help them. But though they tramped about for two days, they saw no living soul, and the only sign of human life was a deserted village, with arrows sticking in the walls of the huts—a sinister hint of war.

A few days later they were cheered by the sight of several natives approaching, leading a cow. The Captain, in particular,

was overjoyed at this, for his young children and Dona Leonora were sorely in need of milk. He went himself to speak to the natives, and they made him understand that they wanted iron.

He sent for some nails, and, on seeing their delight, he began sign-bargaining with them for the cow. When the deal was almost completed, another group of natives suddenly appeared on a nearby hill, and shouted to those with the cow. Thereupon, without a word, the cow-men went away, still leading the longed-for animal. Manoel was in despair, but he dared not take the cow by force, and he had to watch helplessly while she disappeared through the bush.

Manoel de Sousa was a good officer and leader of men and he took all possible care of those in his charge. Three or four times each night he would get up and walk round the camp, inspecting the sentries and staring over the rough and ready fortifications into the bush, at the mysterious shadows which, in the uncertain starlight, always seemed to move. As the days passed he grew weary and very thin, but never relaxed his vigilance and always remained "carefully on the watch".

After twelve days the sick had recovered enough to travel, so Manoel called a council, and spoke thus:

"Gentlemen and friends, you can clearly see the state we are reduced to for our sins. I truly believe that my own alone would have been enough for us to have been submitted to these great privations you see we are undergoing. But Our Lord is pitiful. . . . These days we have spent here were necessary, as you see, gentlemen, for our sick to recover their health. . . . Now, God be praised, they are ready to move. . . .

"As, then, gentlemen and brothers, your lives are at stake as well as mine, it would not be right to do or decide anything without asking the advice of all.

"I ask one favour of you, not to abandon me or leave me if I cannot travel as fast as the fastest of you, because of my wife and children.

"And may God in His Mercy help us all."

They promised never to leave him.

It was decided to travel north towards the river Lourenço Marques had discovered, hoping to reach some Portuguese settlement, or even Mozambique. They collected their baggage

and left the beach which had sheltered them for nearly two weeks.

They were led by André Vaz, the pilot, and his men, carrying a crucifix and a banner. Then came Manoel de Souza, with Dona Leonora, borne by slaves in a litter; then their children, each with a slave attendant. Eighty Portuguese and more slaves followed. After these came the master of the galleon with his seamen, and the female slaves. Pantaleao de Sa, the Captain's brother-in-law, brought up the rear with about two hundred people, Portuguese and slaves.

Of the five hundred persons in this strange and tragic procession, the Portuguese numbered one hundred and eighty.

III

Thus they proceeded for a month. They had no food but some spoiled rice salvaged from the sea, and wild fruits. They were very weak—now and then people dropped out and had to be left behind. One day Manoel noticed that his little ten-year-old bastard son was no longer with them. At first he thought that the child, who was so exhausted that he had to be carried on the back of a slave, was at the rear of the column with his uncle. But those whom he asked replied that the boy had been left almost two miles behind.

Wild with anxiety, Manoel offered five hundred crusadoes to anyone who would go back down the trail and find him. But it was dusk now, and no one would go—for lions, leopards and snakes abounded, and stragglers rarely survived until morning. Manoel, frantic with grief, realized that he could not abandon his wife and the other two children—and so he went forward with his people, “though it was like leaving the light of his eyes to him”. The poor little boy and the slave who was carrying him were never seen again.

Every day those who could go no farther fell in their tracks, and there were heart-breaking scenes of farewell. Their friends could not even stay with them until they had reached the safety of death. The doomed ones begged for their prayers, kissed them good-bye, and lay down to await the end, watching the procession move away. When the last human being had passed from

A coastal Dhow
entering the old
harbour of
Mombasa with
Fort Jesus in
the background.



Photograph by
Fergus Wilson



Naves celadas que furmo quibus Bellis et transportando
mercatus utinam Luytan, et cumus has[te] Malakaren
Faren welle die Portugiesen ih her vanden die Malakaren
et worden ter wille ih en ope[n]ingh[er] te werren.

46 cm 2

By Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum

An early sixteenth-century engraving of Linschoten's depicting the ships used by the Portuguese for fighting and carrying merchandise.

their failing sight, the dust slowly settled back on to the ground. But with the dusk, shadows gathered and sounds came from the bush. Now, perhaps, galvanized by terror to useless strength, the dying person got to his feet and staggered after his friends. Soon powerful, silent forms came slinking, crouched a second, then leaped—one wild cry rang through the African night, and all was over.

The survivors struggled on, still led by their pilot, their crucifix and their banner. They suffered agonies of grief for those left behind, and terrible hunger, thirst and weariness themselves.

They forded rivers, beating the water and shouting to scare the crocodiles away; they climbed up and down mountain ranges; they fought their way through miles of thorns which tore their clothing to rags, and lacerated their skins. At times they had to march, slowly and painfully, for days on end over boulders so heated by the sun that they burned through the soles of their pitifully inadequate footwear. By the end of the first month they estimated that they had travelled three hundred miles, though as the crow flies they had only covered ninety.

They were so hungry that they ate old snake-skins soaked in water, which they bought from each other for fifteen crusadoes; and so thirsty that those who found or fetched water sold it for ten crusadoes a pint, or one hundred crusadoes a cauldron of two gallons. Sometimes there were quarrels, so the captain arranged to buy all the available water himself, and portioned it out with his own hand, paying for that he took for his family. Most of them had saved a surprising amount of coin and jewellery from the wreck, and thus were able to pay each other high prices for the barest necessities of life. Many were far too weak and ill to have any chance of survival, yet their love of money never died.

Besides hunger, thirst, sickness, heat and weariness they were perpetually harried by natives who moved through the bush alongside them, usually remaining invisible; shooting arrows at them by day and sometimes attacking their camps at night. However, the Portuguese were well armed and did not lose their courage. Though some were killed, in the end they always managed to drive off their assailants.

Three months after their journey began, they came across two Kaffir villages, ruled over by an old chief, whose honest

face and dignified bearing filled them with confidence. He greeted them kindly, gave them huts to rest in, and women to wait on them; provided them with food, milk and firewood, and with everything he could think of which they might need.

It appeared that he had met some of their countrymen before, for Antonio Caldeira and the famous Lourenço Marques had stayed in his village. These two had named him Garcia de Sa, after a friend of theirs whom they said he resembled, both in appearance and goodness of heart. The old chief was very proud of his friendship with the white men, and welcomed this great crowd of exhausted travellers, though they threatened to eat him out of house and home. Though the land was fertile and could have grown large quantities of food, the natives—with no thought for the morrow—only cultivated small patches, just enough for their daily needs; while their sole meat supply came from what the Portuguese called “wild cattle”.

Garcia de Sa wanted to keep his guests with him. He begged them to stay. He was at war, he explained, with two of his neighbours, one of whom ruled the country through which the Portuguese had just come. The other lived beyond, over the great river, and he was far more powerful than Garcia. The old man asked the white men to stop and help to fight him; saying that if they went on they would surely be attacked, robbed and murdered.

But Manoel and his advisers decided to continue their journey. Garcia then begged them to assist him against his other neighbour; he wanted a small company of Portuguese to accompany his troops on their next expedition. This they felt bound to do; so Pantaleao de Sa and twenty Portuguese volunteered to fight for their friend the “Kinglet”, and in due course, with an army of five hundred natives, they went back over their old route for a distance of eighteen miles.

There they found and fought the enemy chief, completely defeating him, and returned in triumph to the village, driving a large mob of cattle before them. Old Garcia could hardly express his gratitude and delight. He could not bear to let his guests go and persuaded them to stay with him a little longer while the warriors rested from their labours.

CHAPTER SEVEN

1552

I

WHEN they had recovered their strength it was decided to proceed with the search for Lourenço Marques' river. They were in fact, already on the banks of this river, and had seen the red sign left by travelling Portuguese at every stage in their journey, in case other wanderers might come that way. For some strange and inexplicable reason they failed to realize how near safety they were, and it seems as though an evil fate was driving them on towards their doom. For the last time their host implored them not to leave him, but they were adamant. So, full of forebodings, the kindly old man promised them help in crossing the river. They found some canoes. Manoel sent two of the men to investigate the farther bank, but they stole a canoe and sailed away towards the mouth of the river.

About this time there were signs that Manoel's mind was beginning to give way. His had been a heavy burden. He was racked with anxiety over the future of his wife and surviving children, he felt responsible for all those lives which had been lost, and his own personal sufferings were aggravated by lack of sleep because of his perpetual vigilance. His manners, always so courtly and kind, those of "a Knight, a Lover, and a Liberal Hand", began to change; he became brusque and suspicious, and almost insulted the old chief in his efforts to get away from the hospitable village.

Believing that Garcia had some evil design towards them, Manoel asked him to leave them on the banks of the river, only lending boats and men. Rather hurt, perhaps, but still only wishing them well, the old man said good-bye, and returned home. The travellers crossed the river and set out once more, still led by the pilot, the crucifix and the banner, on the next stage of their *via dolorosa*.

For five days they walked through the bush, until they came to another river. The surrounding country was fairly thickly

populated, and some of the natives with the Portuguese were beginning to pick up a little of the local dialect. At the second river they slept on a sandbank; but the water was brackish and quite unfit to drink. They were almost mad with thirst, and the children could not stop crying.

At last Manoel persuaded some men to go back for fresh water, for which he paid them one hundred crusadoes a cauldron. There was nothing to eat, but the water, when it came, relieved the worst of their sufferings. Two days later more natives appeared, and agreed to ferry the white men over in return for a few nails. They also told them that a ship carrying men like them had been there, but was now gone. This news raised their hopes a little.

When the canoes were in mid-stream, Manoel, who had been gazing strangely round him, and scowling in a manner quite foreign to his nature, suddenly drew his sword and shouted, "Dogs, where are you taking me to?" His companions looked at him in alarm, and the startled natives instantly dived overboard. Dona Leonora seized her husband's hand, trying to calm him and begging him not to hurt the black men, who were their only hope. Meanwhile the others in the boat took away Manoel's sword, calling out to the swimmers to return. The natives, not wishing to lose their canoe, cautiously came back. Manoel sat quietly, holding his head with both hands, moaning a little and murmuring: "The pain—oh, the pain in my head!" When they got ashore, his wife tied wet cloths round his head, and made him rest under a tree. But it was now obvious that something was seriously wrong with their captain; and from this time onwards his influence over his people was lost.

After a while they moved on again, but soon saw more natives approaching them, some with spears in their hands and others with arrows already fitted to their bow-strings. The Portuguese prepared to fight, but a native girl from Sofala, who acted as interpreter, stepped forward and spoke to the strangers. She said they were shipwrecked Christians; that they were travelling towards the big river (the Limpopo); she asked for food and said they would pay well. The natives replied that their village was but one hour's walk away, and beckoned them forward.

A sadly-diminished party of wanderers followed them. Of

the five hundred people who had survived the wreck, only one hundred and twenty remained. All were on foot, for litters and slaves to carry them, were things of the past. Though she was a delicate young noblewoman, reared in the hot-house atmosphere which surrounded Portuguese ladies of that time, Dona Leonora now walked "as sturdily as any strong countryman". She stepped out with the others, comforting and helping the rest of the women in the party and frequently carrying one of the children herself.

"It would really seem," said the chronicler, "that the Lord in His mercy came to her aid. If not, how could a weak woman, unaccustomed to hardships, make her way along such rough pathways, suffering such hunger and thirst? For by now they had walked over three hundred leagues. . . ."

When they reached the village they were not taken to the chief's huts, but led to some trees to wait. They sat down in the shade, hardly daring to hope for succour, almost resigned to whatever fate was in store for them. Natives brought them food, which they paid for with nails. They asked where they were, and whether Portuguese ships were ever seen on the water of this river. Yes, the natives assured them, very often the white men's ships came here from India, and if they waited long enough they were certain to see one.

II

A few days later, rested and fed, Manoel began once more to try to make some plans. He no longer thought as clearly as in the old days, but asked everyone for advice and seemed unable to make up his mind. His wife watched him sorrowfully. More and more clearly she realized that her husband's troubles had been too much for him, and that if they were, by some miracle, to be saved, the decisions must not be left to Manoel to make.

Manoel talked to the chief, and asked permission to stay where they were until the next ship arrived. The chief, who was probably old Garcia's enemy, replied that he would gladly keep them, but that there was not enough food in his village to feed

them all. Let the Portuguese disperse, he said. Manoel and his family, and those whom he wished to keep with him, could stay where they were. The remainder must go to other villages, where the head-men would take good care of them, and where they could rest and await a ship in perfect safety.

But, said the chief, they must give up their arms. His people were afraid of muskets, and as long as the Portuguese kept them, would do nothing for them. The Chief promised to keep the guns safely until a ship came in, and then to return them. Once more Manoel hesitated. He should have known that their only hope of safety lay in their arms, and in remaining together. Though the natives heavily outnumbered them, though they had them practically at their mercy in that wild country, though the Portuguese were famished, exhausted, completely lost, and now almost leaderless, and though they only had five muskets left; still the blacks dare not attack them whilst they carried guns, and remained in one group. Manoel held another consultation.

He had become a weak, bewildered man, he could not bring himself to do anything without the approval and support of the others. He was weary beyond belief, and all his energy had gone. He was as that other who lived centuries later, and who, also touching the depths, wrote:

*J'ai perdu ma force et ma vie,
Et mes amis et ma gaieté
J'ai perdu jus'ce qu'a la fierté. . . .*

He told his friends he could go no farther, for his wife and children were too weak to move. He and his family must stay where they were and accept whatever fate the Lord might send. Those who wished to remain with them could do so, but they must surrender their arms, to inspire confidence in the natives, and gain their trust.

Let those who wished to, go on; all he prayed of them was to try to send help, should they come across any Portuguese. As for himself, "his decision was that if God wished to make an end of him and his family, His will should be done." Then he ordered the guns to be handed over.

This weak counsel proved more clearly than anything else could, that Manoel, who proffered such advice, and the men

who accepted it, were no longer entirely responsible for their actions. They had given up the struggle, and lack of courage hastened their end. The decision to surrender the arms filled Dona Leonora with dismay. She implored her husband and the others not to be so reckless as to part with their only hope of safety.

But they would not heed her. It was not for a woman to give advice in the councils of men.

In her despair she cried: "You are giving up the arms! Now I know that we are all lost!"

So the natives came and carried the precious muskets away to the chief's house; and from that moment the fate of the Portuguese was sealed.

As soon as the white men were disarmed, the natives set on the larger group and, roughly herding them into small parties, began to rob them. Then they hustled them off in various directions, beating them as they went. Very soon the Portuguese had been stripped naked, and driven away out of sight.

Manoel and his family and the few who had stayed with them, appalled at what was happening, clung to each other trembling, while the children wept loudly, and brave Leonora tried to calm their fears and hide her own. In a merciless flash of understanding, Manoel realized that it was his weakness which had led them all to the very brink of death. He clasped Leonora's hand, watching wild-eyed while the yelling natives drove the little groups of Portuguese in front of them with sticks and spears and whips of hippo-hide.

Then it was their turn. The chief signed to his warriors. Instantly they attacked and robbed the Captain and his wife and the twenty odd people with them. They made a rich haul, for, strange as it may seem, the Portuguese had contrived to hide and carry on them throughout their dreadful journey, jewellery, precious stones and coins which were worth many thousand crusadoes. All this was now taken from them; but unlike the others, they were not yet stripped.

The chief told them to leave the village and to follow their friends into the bush. He said he had no wish to harm them further.

III

The first party, ninety in all, including Pantaleao de Sa and three other gentlemen, were now wandering helplessly, naked and lost.

Though they had been separated, after a time they managed to find each other; and then at least they had the consolation of being together.

“So they started out again together; beaten, despondent, without arms, clothes, or money to buy food with, and without their Captain. They now no longer looked like men. . . .” They had no leader, no counsellors, no idea of where they were, or where to go; and no one to give them advice. Hopelessly lost, they strayed into the jungle, and most of them were never seen again.

Of all the people who had left the beach after the wreck of the *San Joao*, only a handful of Portuguese, fourteen male slaves and three female slaves survived. Some reached safety alone on their feet. Some were rescued by a Portuguese ship, whose captain, hearing of the lost and wandering white men, sent messengers with ransoms of beads to look for them. These few were found and taken to Mozambique.

Pantaleao de Sa became separated from the rest, and struggled on by himself, living on wild fruits and roots, and drinking water from the river. After many days of wandering through the “Caffre” country, he came to an Arab settlement. Naked, haggard, and on the point of collapse, he staggered to the Sultan’s house, and begged the people clustered round the door for help. But they refused, for their Sultan was very ill—dying, they thought, from a festering sore on his leg which was now beyond healing.

With a flash of inspiration “the illustrious Portuguese” told them that he was a doctor and that God had undoubtedly brought him here, at this very moment, in order to save their ruler’s life. This put a new aspect on the situation. They gladly went within and told the Sultan, who ordered the stranger to be brought to him.

De Sa looked at the wound, at the dry skin and the blood-shot eyes of the sufferer; he felt the fluttering pulse and saw

that death was very near. However, he said cheerfully: "Take good heart, you will easily recover your health," and then went out to think things over. His own prospects were now, if possible, even worse than before. He was a soldier, not a doctor; used to taking lives, not saving them, and he knew nothing of medicine. He had no idea of how to help the sick man, and realized that if death came, as it very shortly would, he, Pantaleao, would die too—for the natives would kill him more painfully and slowly than the jungle would have.

Weak, hungry and frightened as he was, Nature took the usual course with him, and he made water in the sand. An idea came into his mind: gathering up the mud, he took it to the Sultan and put it on the wound. Then he was led away, given food and clothes, and a bed on which he lay and slept—for, as he must have thought, the last time.

Next day he was awakened by the noise of many people streaming from the Sultan's house, running towards him, yelling and shouting, leaping in the air and waving sticks. Pantaleao arose proudly to meet his death. But they flung themselves on the ground at his feet, kissing his hands and robe, and crying that his magic medicine had cured the Sultan. The poison had gone and the wound was now clean and healthy. With slow and ponderous dignity de Sa made his way to his patient's bedside, and saw, to his utter astonishment, that the wound was in truth perfectly clean. He repeated the treatment for several days until the Sultan was cured.

Then Pantaleao de Sa was set upon an altar, and all the people, led by the Sultan, came to worship him. They begged him to stay amongst them, and the Sultan offered him half his kingdom.

The weary traveller, only too thankful for this reversal of fortune, agreed to remain for a time, but insisted that, later on, he must be taken to Mozambique. And so, for a while, he stayed with his new friends. Then, laden with gold and precious stones, and escorted by a large party of armed men, Pantaleao de Sa came at last to Mozambique, and to safety.

IV

Manoel and those with him were not so fortunate.

The Captain himself, who for some days had been on the verge of insanity, alternated between moods of violent rage and of black, dumb despair. He knew what was happening—worse still he knew it was largely his fault; but his mind no longer functioned properly, and he was incapable of thinking clearly.

Dona Leonora, despite her anguish for her husband and children, did not lose her courage, but summoned the few who were left, and asked them if their wisest plan might not be to try to find Pantaleao and his companions. Although they were gone two days, their tracks were still clearly visible.

The others agreed that this was the best thing to do, and they wearily set forth once more. Their tiny party now consisted of the two children, André Vaz, the pilot, Alvaro Duarte Fernandes, the boatswain's mate, one or two Portuguese women including Leonora's old nurse, and some female slaves who, faithful creatures that they were, had stayed with their loved master and mistress; though they could easily have slipped away to freedom in any of the villages through which they had passed.

Leonora was by now very weak, sorrowful and despondent, for she feared they would never reach their friends, and she was so exhausted that she was barely able to walk. Very slowly, with frequent rests, they pushed on through the jungle. As they went, natives from the village trailed them. These thieves were determined not to let them escape even with their clothes, but they had feared to strip them in the village itself, because of possible reprisals from the Portuguese authorities, should the outrage ever be heard of.

After a time, deep in the bush, the natives came up with them. They rushed at the travellers and tore their garments from them, even taking the tattered rags still worn by the two small children. All submitted quietly save Leonora. Her worn nerves snapped, she suddenly recovered her strength and fought like a tigress, "for she was of a nature to prefer being killed by the Caffres, to being left naked before all the people".

And killed she would probably have been, but that her husband begged her not to struggle. He reminded her that all were born naked, and since God willed this to happen, she should not refuse to go naked now. Thereupon Leonora stood still while they pulled her clothes off.

Then she gave a great cry and flung herself down, covering herself with her long hair. The natives went away jubilantly carrying their wretched spoils, while Leonora, her courage broken at last, lay sobbing on the ground, and with her bare hands frantically dug a hole in which to hide herself. She made a trench and lay in it, covered to the waist with earth, while her hair veiled the rest of her body.

Manoel asked the old nurse who had been left with a fragment of shawl, to let Dona Leonora have it, which she did. But Leonora would not move. She sobbed out that she would die where she was, and prayed the Lord to have mercy on her soul.

The men of their party moved away, ashamed to see the nakedness of their Captain and his lady. When Leonora at last stopped weeping, she told them to go on and save themselves.

“‘We must end our lives here for our sins. Commend us to God. If you reach India or Portugal, tell them how you left Manoel de Sousa and myself and our children.’

“They, seeing it was not in their power to alleviate their Captain’s exhaustion, nor the poverty and misery of his wife and children, went off through the jungle to save their lives as best they might.”

But the boatswain’s mate refused to leave his master, and the girl slaves also stayed. These loyal people were afterwards saved.

Manoel, mad though he was, could not bear to sit by and listen to Leonora and the children crying. He still felt the primitive male urge to find food for his family. He had been wounded in the leg by the natives, but he limped away into the bush, looking for wild fruit. When he returned he found Leonora very weak, she had hardly ceased weeping since the natives had stripped her, nor had she moved. One of the children had died, and Manoel made a shallow grave for him in the sand. Then he lay down beside his wife, trying to pray with her and comfort her. Thus they passed their last night together.

When dawn came, Manoel left her once more, still hoping to find some food. When he returned, he found Leonora and the other child dead, and the slaves weeping broken-heartedly over their bodies.

"They say that when he found her dead he did nothing but make the slaves retire, and sit down near her with his head in his hands for the space of half an hour, without weeping or saying anything. His eyes were fixed on her, and he paid little heed to the child.

"When that space of time was over, he arose and began to dig a hole in the sand with the help of the slaves. Still not speaking a word he buried her and his son with her. When this was ended, he again took the same path which he had taken when he had gone to look for the fruits, saying nothing to the slaves.

"He went into the jungle and they never saw him again. . . .

"So husband and wife ended their lives."

CHAPTER EIGHT

1580—1615

I

IN 1580 Portugal suffered a severe blow to her power and her prestige. King Sebastian, successor and grandson of John III, was a wild and brave young man. Spoilt by his mother, Queen Catherine, and by his great-uncle, the Cardinal Henry, who were co-regents, he later came under the evil influence of the brothers Camara—one of whom was his tutor, and the other Prime Minister. When he was only fourteen years old they declared him to be of age, thus depriving the regents of their position.

The young King had his own ideas as to how his country should be run. His policy was one of austerity at home and conversion of the heathen abroad. He tried to curtail his people's luxurious way of living, forbidding them to have more than two dishes for dinner. He encouraged the Inquisition, and increased taxation on converted Jews. Finally, he decided to embark on a new crusade in North Africa, in order to convert the entire Moorish race to Christianity. Assembling a large army, he landed at Ceuta. But he was no strategic genius, and at the battle of Alcazar his force was utterly routed. Seeing that all was lost Sebastian, with wild and desperate gallantry, galloped upon the Moorish cavalry, followed only by a faithful equerry. Both young men were killed, and the Portuguese army practically annihilated.

Cardinal Henry, succeeded as Henry I. He was an old man, and a sick one; and he knew he had not long to live. The succession to the throne of Portugal was decided by a Cortes held in Lisbon. They announced that their next sovereign should be Catherine, Duchess of Braganza, the eldest daughter of Manuel the Fortunate's son, Edward. Of all Manuel's other sons, only one had a child, Antonio, Prior of Crato, and he was illegitimate.

This decision did not suit Philip of Spain, the son of Manuel's

daughter, Isabel, by the Emperor Charles V. He meant to join Portugal to his own Kingdom. He bribed Catherine's husband not to allow his wife to accept the throne, by promising him the Kingdom of Brazil. Antonio, meanwhile, had declared himself King, but his following was weak, and was easily defeated by a Spanish army which marched into Portugal under the Duke of Alva. The population were apathetic; they docilely accepted Philip as their sovereign, and thus entered upon the period which they afterwards referred to as "the sixty years captivity". The Duke of Braganza, powerless to assert his rights, had to be content with the office of High Constable and the Order of the Golden Fleece—poor substitutes for the vast territory of Brazil.

While Portugal's power was waning in Europe, her prestige sank in the East. Turkish pirates began to appear in the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf, and to prey on Portuguese shipping.

In 1585 a Turk called Mirale Bey decided to sack and plunder some of the rich Portuguese settlements. His fleet consisted of two leaky old ships, manned by cut-throats. He sailed down the Indian Ocean on the wings of the monsoon, but one of his ships was so rotten that she foundered. In the other he reached Mogadishu, where the Somalis extended to him a haughty welcome. He told them that he was the commander of a large Turkish fleet, that he had sailed on ahead to reconnoitre the coast, and wished to meet with those proud spirits who were willing to fight for their freedom, and to drive the Christians into the sea. The Somalis believed him and enthusiastically declared themselves allies of the Sultan of Turkey.

Greatly encouraged, and taking with him reinforcements of ships and men, Mirale Bey sailed on, announcing himself at each port as the deliverer of the faithful from the Portuguese yoke, and the defender of the oppressed and exploited. Everywhere he received wild welcomes, and no one noticed that the Turkish fleet of which he spoke so proudly, never appeared.

When the Portuguese heard of his approach, the settlers in the country districts fled to the towns and the garrisons looked to their weapons and defences. All down the coast the Arab-ruled towns and islands flocked to the banner of Mirale Bey. Barawa and Kismayu, both Somali strongholds, hastened to

declare themselves for him. Faza, Paté, Lamu, Kalifi and, of course, Mombasa, welcomed him with open arms. Helped by a Swahili Sheikh, he captured a Portuguese ship, but its crew escaped to Lamu. The Sultan of Lamu, anxious to be of service to the great Turkish "admiral", seized the fugitives and handed them over to Mirale Bey. They were taken to Constantinople, where the unhappy men were sold as slaves, and all died in captivity.

Mirale Bey's triumphal progress was marred only by the proud refusal of the "Ladies" of Melinde to betray their allies. He left them alone and sailed on in search of easier booty, promising himself and them to return later in full strength, and subdue them.

By the time he was nearing Mombasa, the enterprising Turk had collected a fine fleet of Portuguese ships, and a huge amount of booty. When he landed, the Sultan of Mombasa gave him a great welcome. Mirale Bey offered him the protection of Constantinople, which was accepted with alacrity. The Sultan of Mombasa wrote to the Sultan of Turkey, asking him to send a strong force to his island, to build a castle there and instal a permanent Turkish garrison.

No sooner had he left Mombasa than the Sultan of Melinde sent a ship speeding to Goa, to tell the Portuguese of this menace to their settlements, and to ask for help.

A year after his first, lucrative voyage, Mirale Bey started for home, carrying £60,000 worth of loot and more than fifty Portuguese prisoners.

Meanwhile, a new danger was approaching the coast, this time from the south, and by land. A large, warlike tribe called the Zimba, a branch of the Zulu nation, had left their country and were moving slowly northwards. Like the deadly carnivorous ants, known as "Siafu" they ate every living thing in their path, for they were cannibals.

When they reached the Zambesi, one horde travelled up the river valley, overwhelming all the Portuguese and Arab settlements they found on their way. Another mass moved eastwards, devastating the country and devouring the inhabitants. Finally they reached Mozambique, and halted on the shore of the mainland, not quite daring to attack so strong a city. Instead they destroyed all the food in the vicinity, and the people of

Mozambique were nearly starving when the savages moved slowly on.

By 1587 the Zimba had reached the mainland opposite the island of Kilwa. The impoverished town had very little protection, for the straits were too narrow to keep invaders off. The Zimbas stormed it. The streets ran with blood as they slaughtered three thousand of its people, and all through the night fires burned among the houses, while the cannibals feasted.

In due course, they resumed their progress, moving up the coast irresistibly, like a dark and horrible flood. They left nothing alive behind them. Villages were burnt, and people and crops devoured, as the human locusts travelled on.

While the Zimba horde was creeping northwards, an avenging Portuguese fleet had sailed from Goa to punish the rebel towns who had succumbed to Mirale Bey's blandishments. Eighteen ships carrying six hundred and fifty men appeared off the coast of East Africa. But the rebels escaped lightly.

Mogadishu, that hornet's nest, was left alone. The Sultan of Paté begged for forgiveness. Neither he, nor his people, he explained, had harmed the Portuguese—with whom, indeed, they had always lived as brothers. He had not been strong enough to oppose the powerful Turkish Admiral, closely followed, as he was, by his great fleet of Turkish ships. He had been helpless and was in no way to blame for what had happened.

The Sultan of Lamu, on the other hand, had no excuses to offer. He had seized Portuguese subjects and handed them over as slaves to the Turk. He realized that there could be no forgiveness for him.

He ran away.

When they reached Faza, the anger of the Portuguese suddenly rose and boiled over. All their frustrated vengeance was poured on to this small island. They looted the town and burnt it. They massacred hundreds of the people—men, women and children were put to the sword. All the dhows were burnt, all the plantations devastated.

This was the only town which suffered. After it was destroyed and as though they had spent their wrath and lost interest, the Portuguese sailed back to Goa.

Meanwhile the Zimbas were slowly drawing nearer, leaving death and desolation in their wake.

In 1588 Mirale Bey suddenly reappeared. No sooner had the Portuguese gone than the Arab towns—except, of course, Melinde—sent him frantic messages, reminding him of his promises, imploring him to come and deliver them from the Christians.

They promised to supply him with ships and men, and to help with the cost of equipping them. They would give him everything he needed, if only he would come and rescue them. This time he arrived with five fine ships and several hundred well-armed men. It was a far cry from the day when the unknown adventurer first appeared in his leaky old dhow, armed only with a glib tongue and a talent for invention! His reception now was rapturous, and every town acclaimed him as the saviour of Islam in Azania. Only loyal Melinde remained faithful to her allies. When Mirale's ships dropped anchor in the bay, the brave little town opened fire on them.

Mirale landed at Mombasa and dispersed his men in strong positions near the harbour. Then he prepared to attack Melinde, eagerly assisted by the men of Mombasa.

Meanwhile, the towns farther south were hopefully awaiting him. Indeed Pemba was so anxious to be rid of the Portuguese that the people rose one night, drove out their pro-Portuguese Sultan, and massacred most of the white people on the island as they fled through the mosquito-haunted forests. The deposed Sultan made his way to Mombasa, where he later on embraced Christianity, married a Portuguese lady, and settled down to a quieter life.

By now the Zimba had reached the mainland opposite Mombasa. They saw the Turkish and Arab dhows patrolling the narrow straits. They saw the fort and town, protected by a strong army of Moslems, and realized that the Islanders themselves were well-armed and ready to fight. The Zimbas camped in their thousands on the mainland, waiting with relentless and deadly patience. Mombasa, like the other towns they had overwhelmed, was bound to fall into their hands some day, and all its wealth and its people would be at their mercy.

News of Mirale Bey's reappearance had reached Goa. The Portuguese were enraged when they heard that this pirate had entrenched himself in their own city of Mombasa, that his flag flew over the fort, and that he was preparing to attack Melinde.

They hastily assembled a fleet of twenty ships and sailed with all speed for the African coast. At Melinde they picked up reinforcements. The Sultan joined them in person, and also the Portuguese Commandant of the garrison at the head of his troops.

As the Portuguese bore down on Mombasa the Zimba sent to Mirale Bey, offering to help him fight off their mutual enemy. The Turkish Commander agreed to let them land on the island. He feared the strong fleet rapidly approaching him, and he felt that even such obscene and unclean allies as these cannibals were better than none. The Zimba began crossing to the island, and the Portuguese ships sailed into the harbour almost at the same time.

But the Zimba had no sooner landed than they turned on the islanders and massacred them. They rushed through the town, spearing all whom they saw. Hard on their heels came the Portuguese, burning and looting as of old. The appalled townspeople and the garrison of Turks and Arabs fled into the thick bush in the centre of the island. The Zimba hunted them out, combing through the bush with their spears and capturing hundreds of victims. Many of the islanders threw themselves into the sea, where they drowned or were seized by sharks. Over two hundred were rescued by Portuguese ships; while in the town the horrified white men attacked the cannibals and killed all they could. The survivors fled to the mainland and in due course the Zimbas resumed their slow progress northward.

Finally they reached Melinde. Here they tried to storm the city, but the walls were too strong, and, besides her own people and the Portuguese garrison, Melinde had good friends in the Wasegeju, a fighting up-country tribe, who came flying to the rescue. Three thousand of their warriors fell on the Zimba from the rear. The terrible cannibals were completely defeated; the remnants of the vast horde which had left a trail of human bones from south of the Zambesi right up to the walls of Melinde, fled into the interior. No trace of them was ever seen again.

During the sack of Mombasa, Mirale Bey was captured by the Portuguese. He was put in chains and taken to Lisbon. There he became a Christian, thus, said the chronicler, gaining for his soul what he had lost in worldly goods. He never

returned to Africa, and the rest of his life was spent living peacefully among the white men he had harried and pillaged so successfully for four triumphant years.

Back in Africa, the Portuguese raged up and down the coast in vengeful mood. Gone were the patience and tolerance they had shown after Mirale's first visit. They beheaded the Sultan of Lamu. Two leading townsmen of Paté who had allied themselves with Mirale Bey were also executed, and a collective fine was levied on the people of the island. Pemba was reduced to abject obedience. Manda was sacked and its plantations destroyed. Order was restored with a strong hand, and then the Portuguese sailed home to Lisbon.

II

At the end of the century the first English ships began to appear in the Indian Ocean. Drake, "fearing no more the sea than a dish of water" sailed his small ship westward round the Cape in 1580, during his famous circumnavigation of the globe. Cavendish passed that way in 1586.

In 1591, the *Edward Bonaventura*, Mr. James Lancaster, arrived off the east coast of Africa. Lancaster put in at several points, attracted by the stories of Linschoten, who had written glowing descriptions of the fine harbours, fresh water and food to be obtained in the East African towns. He said of Portuguese ships, that they carried to India, "gold, ambergris, ebon wood and ivory and many slaves, both men and women, which are carried thither because they are the strongest in all the East countries to do all the filthiest and hardest labour wherein they only use them".

The English ship stopped at the Comoro Islands and the Sultan and some of the leading "Moors" were entertained on board. At first the Arabs were friendly, intrigued by this new tribe of white men who looked so different from the Portuguese. They were taller; fair-haired, red in the face rather than brown. They were quietly dressed, and reserved in their manner. They did not boast or threaten. Soon the Arabs made up their minds that these strangers were of no great importance. They did not

seem warlike, but they were Christians, and their death could only bring merit to those who accomplished it. They decided to destroy the English seamen.

One day, Mr. Mace, the Master, was ashore with thirty seamen collecting water and provisions, when a crowd of natives suddenly set upon them and murdered them all.

Lancaster left the Comoros, carefully noting in his journal: "They be very treacherous, and diligently to be taken care of."

He sailed on to Zanzibar and lay off the town of Kizim Kazi, on the south coast, for three months, awaiting the change of monsoon which was to carry him to India. The green island cast its spell over him, as it had done over so many others. As the *Bonaventura* rode there at anchor the Englishmen saw the little houses nestling among the trees, the minaret of the Persian mosque rising in a column above the cobalt sea, the groves of elegant palms tossing their feathery heads in the wind, the thick dark mango trees casting their inviting shade; and Lancaster wrote that this place "is carefully to be sought for by such of our ships as shall hereafter pass that way".

They watched with interest the native boats; frail craft, their planks fastened together with cords of coconut rope, and with wooden bolts; their fragile sails, made of palm leaves dried and sewn together.

Not long after their arrival one of these boats sailed up to them. She brought a letter from the director of the small Portuguese "factorie" which they could see on the shore. He asked them who they were; of what nationality; and what did they want? They replied that they were English; and the boat sailed back to the *factorie* steps, and did not return. Later a boat manned by Arabs approached them, with a priest or sherife on board. The Englishmen took him into the *Edward Bonaventure* and treated him "very courteously". They made an excellent impression on their guest and his friends.

The result of this polite behaviour was that they were summoned to meet the ruler of Zanzibar himself, the Mwenyi Mkuu. He seemed to like the Englishmen, and especially appreciated their kindly treatment of the sherife. He gave orders that their ships should be stocked with fresh water, and two months supplies of food, including a quantity of oranges and

lemons—for by this time sailors had discovered that their good health largely depended on supplies of these two fruits.

The Mwenyi Mkuu told the Englishmen that he had been much mistaken in them. The "Portingales", fearing the appearance of the renowned English sailors in what they regarded as their seas, had tried to set the Zanzibaris against them. They told them, wrote Richard Hakluyt, "from the mouth of Edmund Barker of Ipswich, Lieutenant in sayd voyage, of the false and spiteful dealings of the Portingales towards us, which made them believe that we were cruel people and man-eaters, and willed them if they loved their safety in no case to come near us!"

The Englishmen suffered one tragedy here, for the ship's surgeon, Mr. Arnold, died of heat-stroke. Except for this sad happening, they enjoyed their stay at Zanzibar, and the distrust and dislike of the Portingales did not distress them unduly.

Once more at sea Lancaster conscientiously sat down to his journal, and wrote of "The goodness of the harbour and watering and plentiful refreshing with fish, whereof we took great store with out nets, and for sundry sorts of fruits of the country, as cocos and others which were brought us by the Moors, as also for oxen and hens".

III

Reluctantly the authorities in Lisbon and Madrid came to realize that garrisons in the southern towns of the Azanian Coast, even combined with the unshakable loyalty of Melinde, were not enough to safeguard their mastery of the sea-route to India. The revolt under Mirale Bey had opened their eyes to the dangerous discontent fermenting under the surface of their administration. They were still more alarmed by the appearance, now and then, of English ships—only one or two at a time, it is true, but as significant as the solitary, wandering bee which heralds the approach of the milling swarm whose progress nothing can arrest.

It was decided to build a great fortress at Mombasa, to appoint a governor and a garrison there. Settlers—farmers and

merchants—were to be encouraged to live on the island; their bodies protected by the new fort and their souls cared for by the Augustinian Fathers, who had installed themselves in this most faithful of Moslem strongholds.

Work on Fort Jesus was started in 1592. The stones are said to have been brought ready cut all the way from Portugal; labourers came from Melinde, and masons from India. The architect was John Baptist Cairatto. The Viceroy of the East, Mathias d'Albuquerque, directed the work. Slowly there arose, on a headland commanding the entrance of the harbour, an immensely strong castle. It stood four-square on foundations of coral rock, washed by the sea on one side, fronting the wild bush on another, with its main gates facing the town and the road to the harbour.

It was built in the shape of a Roman cross, and so planned that cannon on the outer walls could enfilade the approaches. The beams were decorated with carving. At each of the corners were bastions called powder towers. They had no loop-holes or arrow-slits, such as one would expect from their commanding position, covering, as they did, the bush inland and the road to Reino, the Portuguese garden settlement; the sea approach, the entrance to the harbour, and the big main street leading into the town. All the openings faced inwards to the platform round the parapets, and on to the courtyard.

It is believed that the towers, away from the shot and flash of battle, were used for storing powder for the cannons, and it would be the duty of the agile little boys used as "powder monkeys", to run to and fro between the towers and the guns, carrying their deadly loads. From the ramparts cannon covered the harbour and the surrounding country. The massive entrance gates were studded with long brass spikes: an idea imported from India to prevent fighting elephants being used as battering rams.

Inside the gates there was a passage wide enough to admit ox-carts, and closed at the inner end by another pair of strong doors. Behind these lay a paved courtyard, flanked on one side by the Chapel of Our Lady of Sorrows, and on another by the Governor's quarters, and cells for prisoners. On the north-western part of the island, where the straits are narrowest, were built two block-houses, guarding a spot known as the

Zimba's Ford. The Portuguese never forgot that night of carnage and horror, and were not to be caught again by an invasion from the mainland.

Whilst this new castle was being built, arrangements were made for the Portuguese garrison to be transferred to Mombasa from Melinde. No sooner was this done than the white merchants in Melinde hurriedly followed.

The Sultan of Melinde, Hasan-bin-Ahmed, felt uneasy at being left without the protection of his allies, for Melinde was not loved along the coast; the other Arabs and even some of the native tribes resented her unbroken fidelity to Portugal.

Sultan Hasan felt he would be safer and happier if he too could live in Mombasa, among his friends, and govern his country from a distance. When the Portuguese heard of his wish, they decided to depose the Sultan of Mombasa, whom they did not trust, and whose dynasty had given them endless trouble, and to install Hasan in his place. In addition, they presented him with an estate and one-third of the Customs revenue.

By 1594, there was a garrison of one hundred Portuguese soldiers living in the town, besides a great many Arabs, Swahilis, and natives, who were trained by the Portuguese to augment their armed forces. Gradually Portuguese immigrants arrived from the mother-country, among them several Portuguese ladies, with their husbands and families.

They settled in Mombasa, where some of the Portuguese girls married wealthy young Arabs, who had been converted to Christianity. They made their homes in the town and near the fort. Some of the men cultivated plantations of palms, or grew vegetables which were sold in the market, and spices which were exported to Persia, Oman and India. Others traded with the East in gold, ivory, and slaves, receiving in return consignments of cloth, which was sold on the coast and among the islands.

Thus the ultimate result of Mirale Bey's invasions and the revolts of the coast people under his leadership, was to strengthen the Portuguese hold in the north. Trade increased, prosperity came to the settlers, and to the natives under their rule. The Church gathered into her fold an ever-increasing number of converts; attracted by the pageantry and mystery of the Roman

Catholic creed, hundreds of natives became Christians. In the south the Jesuits and Dominicans were the spiritual rulers, from Mombasa northwards was the territory of the Augustinians. Besides the Lady Chapel, safely tucked away within the walls of Fort Jesus, the missionaries built at least seven other chapels and churches in and near the town of Mombasa.

The Portuguese had rebuilt and strengthened Mirale Bey's former stronghold at Ras Serani, the original fort seen by da Gama on his first journey. They named it Fort St. Joseph. A tunnel ran deep underground between Fort St. Joseph and Fort Jesus; at high tide sea water flowed in. It was said that the worst offenders of the prisoners taken by the Portuguese were shackled to iron rings fixed to the walls of the tunnel, and executed by drowning.

The native Christians suffered for their faith—they were ostracized and even persecuted by the Moslems—often their property, sometimes their lives, were in danger. As so often happens, hardship and difficulty only strengthened their resolve; and the time came when, side by side with their white fellow Christians, they died for their religion.

The Portuguese priests did much good work among the natives. The Augustinian Prior became a member of the Town Council. A committee was formed to watch over the welfare of the natives, it was presided over by the Prior, together with a community of laymen who were vowed to charitable works and called the Misericordia. Naturally, the more the Christians cared for the natives, and the more converts they obtained, the more the orthodox, fanatical Moslems and their Sherifes detested them. For a few years there was peace on the Island of War, but storms were gathering.

Sultan Hasan-bin-Ahmed was not altogether happy in his position as joint ruler of Mombasa and Melinde. The Portuguese governor of Mombasa, Melo Pereira—an arrogant and domineering man—was perpetually at odds with him. In addition Hasan's uncle in Melinde, Munganja, was jealous of his nephew's wealth and position, and of the fact that the King of Portugal had granted him permission to call himself "Brother-in-Arms of the King of Portugal". When Munganja thought of the money, power and honours which his nephew had accumulated simply by running away from his own city of Melinde, his heart

burned within him. He began to indulge in a favourite local pastime—intrigue against the ruler.

Soon there was trouble in Melinde. Some Portuguese were insulted. The tax-money from Melinde did not flow into the Portuguese coffers in Mombasa as freely as before; perhaps, suggested Munganja, more than his fair share was sticking to the fingers of Hasan? The people of Mombasa resented the rule of one of their former enemies, and soon the Portuguese governor of Mombasa was openly hostile to Hasan, frustrating and humiliating him whenever he could.

Hasan's position became very difficult. In far-away Lisbon and Goa, the authorities were in sympathy with him, but they were out of reach and could never help him in time. He began to fear for his life, and when the Governor suddenly accused him of high treason, he knew the end was near. Once let them arrest him, and he was lost. He might even finish his days chained to the wall in the underground tunnel, helplessly watching the water creep higher and higher till it flowed into his mouth and lungs and choked him to death. He was given the opportunity of going to Goa, and though he would certainly have been treated there with perfect justice, he would not trust himself to the Portuguese in Mombasa for the journey.

It seemed to Hasan that there was but a step between himself and death. Like other Sultans of the coast before him, when faced with threats from the Portuguese, he fled.

He made his way to the mainland and sought refuge among the tribesmen called Mozungolo, who lived at Maxeras, some hundred miles inland. Amongst them were some of his own, freed slaves.

Pleased and excited at having their Sultan with them, they took him in and promised enthusiastically to protect him; and for a time he rested there—shorn of all his riches and honours—but safe, and with a mind at ease. Perhaps he thought his splendid position as ruler of two wealthy cities, and the title of Brother-in-arms to the King of Portugal, hardly worth all the anxieties that went with it—the plots and intrigues, and the ceaseless fear of death.

Resting quietly in the shade of a thorn tree, watching the dark-eyed, glossy-skinned women moving slowly about their village tasks in the languid African fashion, and the fat, naked

babies playing in the dust, he probably felt glad he had abandoned the burden of Sultanship, and could now pass his days in peace among these undemanding people.

But Melo Pereira and Munganja could not feel secure whilst he still lived. Messengers came to the Mozungolo, offering them two thousand pieces of cloth—such wealth as they had never dreamed of, for Hasan's head. The tribesmen were essentially treacherous. The wave of chivalry which had swept over them on the Sultan's arrival, had died down. They were used to him by now, the novelty had worn off, and this dazzling offer was a new excitement.

They murdered Hasan and took his head to the Portuguese.

The authorities in Lisbon and Goa were deeply shocked. A committee of enquiry was set up, and the story of Hasan's life revealed. No evidence was found of any sort of disloyalty to Portugal. He had always been a true servant to the King and State. He had done his best under difficult circumstances, and only the hostility of the Governor of Mombasa, and the intrigues of his scheming uncle at Melinde had forced him to abandon his post.

The committee found that he had been foully and treacherously murdered.

The Portuguese felt that the least they could do was to make amends to his son, Yussuf-bin-Hasan, then a little boy of seven. They decided that he should be taken to Goa, brought up by the Fathers as a Christian, and taught the art of ruling in preparation for the time when he could return to Mombasa and ascend his father's throne.

CHAPTER NINE

1615-1630

I

THERE was constant friction between the Portuguese in Mombasa and the mainland natives, one of the most dangerous tribes being Hasan's murderers. Most of their fighting was done with poisoned arrows. They made the poison from the fruit of the palm-oil tree, and with it impregnated their fire-hardened arrow-heads. This poison was said to be so deadly that even the smell of it might prove fatal. The blood of those struck by these arrows would apparently froth and boil, and the agony was only relieved by death.

The Mozungolo crossed from the mainland on rafts or by swimming where the channel was narrow. At night they would creep past the forts, close to the walls. They murdered any stragglers they could find and then melted away into the darkness. Sometimes they made big-scale raids, and once even succeeded, in a surprise attack, in killing the Governor of the island, Francisco de Souza Pereira.

While the little boy Yussuf was growing to manhood in Goa, the Portuguese in the towns of East Africa were beset with many difficulties. There were countless intrigues; the Arabs never ceased to hanker for their old wealth, position, and freedom to exploit the natives. The natives in Mombasa themselves were restless and always on the edge of revolt. But in the country districts life was easier and more peaceful.

Only ten miles from Melinde, lost in the thick, dark forest, stood a town called Gedi. The buildings were of Persian and Arabic design: lofty, large, and richly carved. Outside the mosques were small baths where the faithful could perform their ablutions before praying. Gedi was protected on the landward side by strong walls, pierced with arrow-slits and loopholes. On the seaward side was a small, lovely bay, into which the sea rushed at high tide, only to ebb leaving an expanse of mud—ample protection in itself from sea-borne invasion. On

the bay was a small quay with a prison, a mosque and several houses.

More houses and mosques strayed through the forest, hidden in a tangle of great trees festooned with long creepers, which swung gently to and fro in the light breeze. In the heart of the forest the town spread out. There stood a stately building which was the palace, or sultanate. The stone archway giving access to the palace enclosure was over twenty feet high. Inside was a great bath, fifty feet long and twenty feet wide. Here the Sultan's women-folk splashed and swam in water which was brought along conduits from the many wells dotted about the city.

It is thought that Shirazi Persians built the first town of Ged about A.D. 1000. Later, it seems they abandoned the city, which was resettled and rebuilt by Arabs shortly before the Portuguese invasion. One of the tombs, of a later period than many of the other buildings, bore the date 1011 in the Moslem year, or A.D. 1601 by our reckoning. On one wall was carved the likeness of a ship; perhaps the Arab buried there was a sea captain who had loved his vessel.

The city's name in the old Swahili tongue was Kalepwa, meaning "the wells that dried up". The name Gedi is possibly derived from the Arab Gidah, which means "buried".

The strangest thing about it was that not once did the Portuguese mention it, either in their maps or their journals. In 1601 Gedi was still sufficiently important for a wealthy Arab to build himself a fine tomb. Yet the Portuguese, who for two hundred years had kept a garrison in Melinde, only ten miles away, apparently never heard of its existence.¹

There were several other villages up and down the coast built after the pattern introduced by the Shirazi Persians. Each was ruled by an Arab family whose houses were ornate, and by

¹ To this day little is known about this lost city, buried in the heart of the African forest. It was discovered in the 1920's by an English surveyor who, pushing through the bush, stumbled over a carved stone. A few years ago, when the writer was walking through the ruins with a native guide she asked him:

"Have your people always known Gedi?"

"Oh yes, we have always known it and have come here to pray."

"And you have never told the white men?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"It is full of devils and spirits, and we thought they wouldn't want to come here," said the guide, looking rather sheepish.

the standard of the times, luxurious. Behind the masters' houses were the slave compounds—sometimes a family owned so many servants they had to be housed in large villages of their own.

In the country places the Portuguese had increased in number, and some of their women had joined them. They and the Arabs usually lived together in perfect friendliness. The Portuguese and Arab ladies—so alike with their long black hair, dark eyes, and honey-coloured skins—visited each other freely, and enjoyed each other's company. Their children played together, and sometimes the young people intermarried.

The Portuguese soldiers of the day were bearded, bold-looking men; they wore cone-shaped, pleated black hats, linen frills round their necks and thick leather jerkins with long sleeves. Their pantaloons reached to their ankles, and cloaks swung from their shoulders. Their long swords were slung on narrow belts worn over the jerkins.

When the white people went out they copied the rich Arabs by having slaves to walk behind them, carrying umbrellas. This was partly to shelter them from the sun and partly to increase their prestige. The slaves were picked for their height and looks and made imposing bodyguards; their feet were bare, they wore jerkins and knee-length pantaloons and, sometimes, turbans. The merchants' clothing was a little more decorative than the soldiers'. Their frills were larger and their hats, which were flat, like very big tam-o'-shanters, were frequently ornamented with jewels.

Portuguese ladies favoured long veils over their hair, fastened with jasmine flowers or the sweetly-scented frangipani. They wore bright silk shawls crossed on the bosom, and full skirts over many petticoats. Never did they venture out without an escort of slave girls, and umbrella bearers. The streets of Lamu, Mombasa, Mozambique, and the other sea-lapped, sun-kissed towns were a gay sight.

Camels and donkeys, arrogantly or humbly (according to their kind) shuffled through the dust, carrying loads of hay or carpets, or vivid green and red chillies, or bales of cloth, or long, coloured gourds. Water-carriers and coffee-sellers trotted about, shining brass containers on their backs, small brass cups in their hands, which they perpetually clinked together in a

jingly little tune, advertising their wares. And the priests were everywhere, selfless and devoted, doing their utmost for the white and coloured Christians, and trying always by example and piety to gain more children for the Church.

II

The Fathers had much to contend with. Not only were most of the Moslems devout, and fiercely faithful to their creed, but there was among the natives a strong belief in witchcraft, fostered by witch-doctors from the "University" at Pemba, and the "College" in Zanzibar.

For many centuries Arab doctors in Mombasa had been healing the sick, using methods prescribed by Hippocrates, the Father of Medicine. Their books contained knowledge, some of which even today forms the basis of European medicine. Early in the Christian era medical books were translated from Greek into Arabic; later, these were brought to the Azanian Coast by Arab doctors, who settled there among their compatriots.

The witch-doctors employed less conventional methods. They were always on the look-out for devils. Some devils lived in caves by the sea, others in the roots of trees. Sometimes a benighted traveller was seen by one, and would become "devil-struck": or a person could become possessed by an evil spirit, and in either case the witch-doctors would have to come to the rescue. To exorcise a spirit it was necessary to sacrifice animals marked in a certain way—perhaps two white cocks, a spotted goat, or a brindled ox would be required to offer up their lives. The blood-letting was followed by a dance, which went on day and night, for as long as the sufferers' finances permitted. Finally the evil spirit could stand the raucous singing, the cymbal-clashing and drum-banging no longer, and took its departure.

Some diseases were treated by reading out loud, slowly and ponderously, a chapter of the Koran; or by tying rolled-up pieces of paper inscribed with verses from it round the patient's neck or arm; or even by his jumping over lines scratched in the earth.

The witch-doctors also had a good knowledge of herbs and roots. They used them skilfully and often with satisfactory results. Other remedies were made from the fat of lions and of monitor lizards; one prescription needed leopard's milk—not an easy commodity to come by. Bad eyesight was cured by cutting the tip of the little finger, and rubbing the blood in the eye. Burning with hot irons and cutting gashes on the patient's body were remedies for various pains, though these cures were not always applied to the afflicted part of the body. An arm might be slashed to cure an aching foot, or vice versa.

The practitioners often diagnosed their patient's illness, and prescribed the cure, by casting stones, beads and trinkets on to the ground from a gourd. Others gazed at heaps of sand, or threw sticks, or mixed ashes with tobacco and smelled it. Very often the doctor did not see the sick person at all. Many spells and charms were also available. Very popular were the ones for protecting property and wives. A dead snake hanging from a tree, or an image like a scarecrow placed in a prominent position near the crops warned the would-be thief that the food was bewitched, and poisonous to all but the rightful owner. And for the predatory male there were snares called "donkey", "dog" or "mat-trap", whose presence guaranteed a wife's faithfulness.

Besides the learned Arab physicians, the native witch-doctors, able to heal or kill, and the charms and spells which everyone knew were infallible, there were dreadful supernatural perils. Ghosts called jinis lurked in the trees, in the sea, in the lakes, and in the bushes by the roadside. There were birds who laid jewelled eggs and snakes who carried jewels in their mouths. There was an enormous serpent out of whose vast mouth came a mist which so blinded the eyes of porters that whole caravans walked into its cavernous jaws and were never seen again.

There were also holy crocodiles, which were worshipped with ghoulish rites and horrible sacrifices.

This was not a gentle age. Men tortured each other's bodies just as the witch-doctors tortured their minds. One form of diversion among warring islanders was for the conquerors to tie their prisoners into bags of coconut matting, and throw the kicking, screaming bundles to the sharks. An ancient Arab punishment was to shut offenders into a small room, and suffocate them with the acrid fumes of burning chillies.

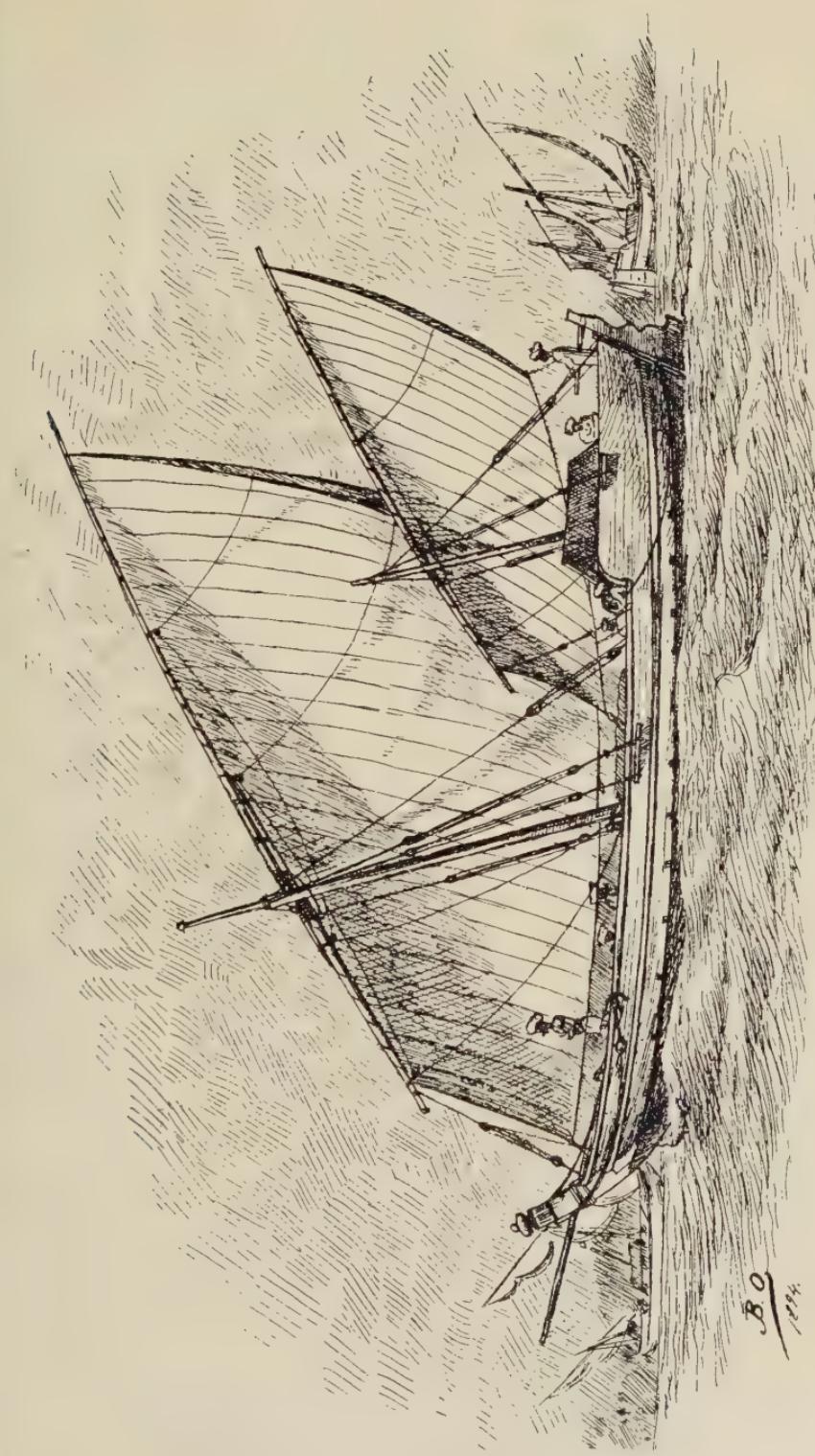
All these customs and fears and superstitions were walls against which the priests beat with courage and perseverance. They made a great deal of progress and obtained a great number of converts along the coast and among the islands; but the hard, bitter core of jealous Moslem and pagan priests and doctors was a menace both to civil administration and to the influence of the Church, and was destined some day to overwhelm them both in a sea of blood.

III

Many were the stories of buried treasure. Often during Arab rebellions, when Portuguese families had to flee for their lives, they snatched a few precious moments to hide what they could, hoping to return later and retrieve what was left of their capital. Vasco da Gama's pillars were said to be raised over caches of jewels and gold. During the centuries, some of these pillars were thrown down and destroyed by treasure-hunters. Somewhere south of Mozambique, men from an English ship once found such a pillar, dug it out, and then started excavating through layers of guano.

Their tools struck a box which they lifted out and opened. Lying in his coffin, his hands crossed upon his breast, his eyes wide open and looking straight at them with an expression of terror, was a Portuguese in the clothes of the sixteenth century. His body had been completely preserved by the chemical action of the guano. His hands were fine and long-fingered—not the hands of one used to manual labour. He lay staring at them with his dead eyes until the horrified English shut the coffin. They reburied it hastily and went away.

The Portuguese on Mombasa island had their country estates and their town houses. Under the shadow of Fort Jesus stood the offices, shops, and dwelling-places of the merchants and their families. Out in the country were the plantations, gardens, and houses, where Portuguese farmers lived and raised crops. They called this district Reino, or Kingdom. Later, when they had all been murdered or had fled, and their houses were in ruins, the place became so badly haunted that no one could



A Portuguese Sailing Ship called *Industre*.

By kind permission of the Biblioteca E Museu da Marinha Lisbon



Photograph by Fergus W.

The Mainsail Fills.

pass by there at night without the risk of being devil-struck, or entered into by some evil spirit.

Baobab trees, whose large, hollow trunks keep rain water fresh for months, and whose naked twisted branches seem to have grown in endless pain, were said not to have been found on the island when the Portuguese arrived; but it became their custom, when they died, to be buried with a pod full of the seed beside them. Thus, the trees grew over their mouldering bodies, and centuries later, the remains of Portuguese settlers and soldiers were found among their roots.

In Mombasa harbour there were always dhows—from Muscat, Calicut, Zanzibar and Sofala, with exotic cargoes. The songs of their wild crews floated across the water as sails were hoisted or lowered, when a ship entered or left the harbour; or as their black, long boats drew into the shore.

The dhows were not fastened with nails but were literally sewn together with ropes of coconut fibre. This was because the Arab sailors believed that when they passed near the “magnetic mountains” one of their imaginary perils of the deep, the iron nails flew out of the ships and rushed through the waters towards the shore.

One type of dhow, called *Mtepe*, never carried coconuts, for if they did the nuts would force open the planks—sewn together with coconut fibre—and the boat would sink. These craft flew white whip-lashes from the mast-heads, for the builders of the *Mtepe* dhows were Barjun Islanders, who once had lived inland. But their wickedness was such that God drove them from their homes to live in islands in the sea, there to work out their salvation; and they still carry the whip-lash to remind themselves of His power and punishment, and to keep their spirits humble.

Below the whip-lash an immensely long streamer floated, showing that the ship came in peace; and if long blasts of a horn were sounded as she entered harbour, it conveyed the good news that there was a cargo of slaves on board, and that people should hurry to the market, to be ready to bid for them. When the *Mtepes* showed several small white flags on the bowsprit, and ornaments below it, this meant that she carried very important passengers. These flags were called “the beard of the *Mtepe*”.

But if a *Mtepe* had outsailed her rivals and reached her destina-

tion ahead of them, she came into harbour with horns blowing, drums beating, cymbals clashing, a red flag flying at the stern, and a cluster of small red streamers below her white pennant—a proud ship indeed.

In some of the dhows the bowsprit was curved like a camel's neck, and on the prow was painted a white eye surrounded by a red ring. This was to commemorate the holy she-camel which had been sent direct from Heaven to the Thamud, a tribe of ancient Arabia, who had impiously killed the divine gift. The eye was the camel's eye and the red paint represented her blood. Tassels fluttered from the prow in memory of those that hung from the camel's rein and headstall.

The big deep-water dhows called Bagala, sometimes carrying as many as three masts, were shaped rather like the Portuguese ships, with high, beautifully carved sterns, like little castles.

Pirates preferred to sail in Persian dhows. These were long, low vessels with projecting prows, sharp sterns and very high rudder-heads. They were built in the Persian Gulf, were fast and easy to handle and dear to the hearts of their murderous crews.

The slave-carrying dhows had the most lucrative trade of all, despite the fact that their cargoes often arrived in very damaged condition, or dead. The survivors were sold in the markets of the coast towns. The more fortunate were bought by local masters, and their lot was often far from unhappy. Arab owners were usually gentle and kind, for Moslems did not forget the Koran's injunction to be good to their slaves, and to free them when they had served faithfully for some years and had earned this reward.

But those destined for export suffered horribly. They were laid in rows in the holds of the ships, two adults with a child lying on or wedged between them. A few inches above their heads was a layer of planks, on these was another row of slaves, surmounted by more planks and more slaves; and so on, until the boat was full. Thus they travelled to Muscat and to Persia, the living released now and then for food and air, and the dead thrown overboard.

When the survivors were finally put ashore they were in a miserable condition, but they fetched good money since they had been brought from so far and the supply was limited; for

slaves living in captivity did not breed easily. Again, once sold, they were well enough treated and it even happened that sometimes freed slaves bought their own ships, signed on their own crews, and were able to embark on the profitable slave trade for themselves.

Besides the slaves living on the coast and islands and those exported to the east, a certain number were taken to Portugal, for natives of East Africa were stronger and healthier than those from the West Coast, and fetched good prices on European markets.

Thus were slaves transported, and thus the slave-trade flourished until it was abolished by the British in the nineteenth century, when ships of the Royal Navy hunted and harried the slave-dhows until they were driven from the seas.

CHAPTER TEN

1630-1631

I

DURING his fifteen years in Goa the little Moslem boy, Yussuf-bin-Hasan-bin-Ali was transformed into an educated, civilized Christian gentleman, named Don Jeronimo Chingulia. He no longer wore a turban, but had shoes on his feet, even indoors, and spoke Portuguese as if it were his native tongue. He carefully copied the manners of the white people, and at the age of twenty-three was a polished young man, the finished product of sixteen years of hard work on the part of the Augustinian monks at Goa. He was married to a Portuguese girl of good family.

In 1630 he sailed from Goa for his native land. He was received on his arrival at Mombasa with all due honour. The Governor, Marcal de Maçedo, accompanied by a kinsman of Jeronimo's, who had been acting as regent, met him at the port, and crowds cheered enthusiastically as he and his pretty young wife passed slowly through the narrow streets to the Sultanate. The Moslems were a little shocked when they saw that the face of their Christian Sultana was unveiled. The more orthodox remembered with sudden dismay that their hereditary ruler, for the first time in their history, was not a follower of the Prophet. They liked it still less when they realized that his children, too, would be brought up as Christians. But their innate good manners forbade them to show any but the warmest welcome to this sophisticated young man; while the native and Arab Christians, at least, were thankful to the depths of their hearts to be at last under the protection of the most powerful Arab in the island, who was also of their own faith.

Jeronimo and his wife were installed in the Sultanate, where he took up the reins of government. At first all went well. His Christian subjects gave him their complete devotion and obedience. The Moslems treated him with respect and courtesy, although there was a certain reserve in their manner which

reminded him all the time of the fact that he had abandoned the faith of his fathers.

The Augustinian priests and the Prior did all they could to help him past the first difficult months, and co-operated with him closely in his efforts to understand the various problems of Sultanship with which he was now faced. The welfare of the people of Mombasa was very near to the hearts of these monks, and perhaps they hoped that under this Christian ruler of the old princely blood, some of the endless resistance which had been silently and politely opposed to their efforts by the Moslem community, could be overcome.

But as time passed, it seemed to Jeronimo that the rest of the Portuguese, from the Governor down to the meanest apprentice lad, developed a subtle superiority in their manner towards him, which caused resentment to begin to fester in his mind like a sore. In Goa everyone had treated him with the respect which he felt was his due.

The potentates and princes of India were far more wealthy, more advanced culturally, and more magnificent in their way of living than the richest Arab ruler of the Azanian Coast. Their relationship with the Portuguese in India was that of equals. The white men were the undisputed rulers of Goa, and the princes of the neighbouring Indian States were of the same standing as they were. The Viceroy of the East regarded the ruling Indians as his equals socially, and his superiors in material wealth. Jeronimo had always been treated in the same way as these Indians of the ruling caste, for he, also, was an Asiatic of royal blood. To the Indians he seemed as one of themselves, the Portuguese were most polite, and the Augustinian Fathers, who had brought him up, behaved towards him as they would to any other royal child entrusted to their care.

Jeronimo, at the age of twenty-three, with his fine Christian name and his pretty Christian wife, his gaudy European clothes, and careful European mannerisms and speech, felt that he was entitled to more respect than he received from this handful of Portuguese living on his island; for he was quite as good as they were, indeed rather better, owing to his descent from a ruling house, and his present position as Sultan of Mombasa and Melinde. And the "handful of Portuguese" themselves regarded this flashily-dressed individual, who was subject to their King

and was only allowed to occupy his throne by their favour, with a faint disdain which they could barely hide.

They found Jeronimo hard to stomach. He seemed to have a great conceit of himself. When all was said and done he was only a petty ruler of two little native towns; he owed his polish to their priests, and his position to their Government's uneasy conscience because of the death of his father.

They thought he needed to be gently reminded as to who were the real masters; and it might even be hinted that if his conduct did not meet with their approval, it was within the bounds of possibility that he might be eased off the throne, and a cousin from Melinde put in his place.

So tension grew in the Island of War. Jeronimo soon realized that the Moslems did not entirely approve of him, while at the same time the Portuguese did not entirely respect him. He felt both afraid and insulted. Sometimes grave old Moslem sherifes or priests would sit with him for hours, conveying in far-fetched, flowery Arabic phrases their fear for his soul, now that he had joined the unbelievers; and what contentment and satisfaction there would be among his people if he returned to the faith of his ancestors.

At least, one of them suggested, when he went to pray at the grave of his father, Hasan-bin-Ali of blessed memory, let him not desecrate this holy spot with the unclean ceremonies of the infidels. There were other disabilities also, they pointed out, under which he now suffered. Allah had created women to be the comforters and cherishers of men. He had ordained by the mouth of his Prophet Mohammed, that each man should be allowed four wives, in order to increase the strength of the family, and to divide the household tasks among the women.

Thus no single one of them would have more duties to perform than she could manage, and the husband would not suffer from the loss of any of his comforts. But the Sultan had deprived himself of this supreme benefit; and for the rest of his life would have to endure the hardship and—in the eyes of many of his subjects—the humiliation, of owning only one wife, and one family of legitimate children.

This was a point which struck home. It annoyed Jeronimo considerably, when he realized that for a man of his wealth and

position, to have one single spouse to deck with jewels and silks, when he might be flaunting four of them before his admiring subjects—was a waste of opportunity. He thought desirously of a Portuguese lady named Natalia de Sa, the beautiful wife of a Portuguese noble living in Mombasa; and of the handsome, haughty wife of the new Governor, Pedro Leitao de Gamboa, and of her twelve-year-old daughter. He wished he could marry them all, and raise families from them. His hot Arab blood yearned towards women; the thought of his polygamous forebears made his present married state seem ridiculous and unbearable.

As time went on this unhappy young man felt increasingly unsure of himself, and lost in a maze of problems. He had been torn, through no fault of his own, from his natural environment, and brought up with a set of values which were entirely foreign to his heritage. He had none of the natural dignity of the Mohammedan Arab, always enhanced by the clothes and customs which they had evolved through the ages, and which suited them. He had been forced to assume a false appearance, and habits which did not come naturally, which made him self-conscious, and at the same time, self-important. He was not at ease among the white men, in spite of his European clothes and speech. He felt that his own people despised him for an apostate, and looked upon his appearance with contempt.

His was a tragic position, and one which has too often been caused—sometimes with terrible consequences—by suddenly lifting an individual from surroundings to which heredity has moulded him, and forcing him to acquire an individuality altogether alien to him. Jeronimo's mind was in a turmoil, his naturally polygamous instincts frustrated, and his self-esteem deeply wounded by the manner of the Portuguese, who by this time were determined to put him in his place.

He began to entertain dark thoughts of passion fulfilled and vengeance achieved. He brooded over the treacherous murder of his father—a man who had always been loyal to the Portuguese, yet whose blood was bought by the Portuguese Governor for some pieces of cloth. Never had the killers been punished. All that the white men had done by way of compensation was to wrest Jeronimo from his home, his people, and the religion of his father, and to have him brought up in an alien country,

and educated in such a way as would best serve his masters' interests later on. They had trained him to be a puppet ruler, which was all he now was.

He went to his father's grave to pray—a bewildered, friendless young man with a twist in his mind—and remembering the words of the Moslem priest, he performed his prayers in the Arabic fashion. He was seen. The rumour crept about that he was abandoning the Christian faith and reverting to Mohammedanism.

Now Jeronimo had one more burden to bear—fear of the Inquisition. If the Portuguese believed that he had deserted their faith, there would be no mercy for him—only a place in the procession of doomed men; the moments of sickening terror as he stood on the piles of fire-wood while the flames crackled towards him, and after that for minutes which would seem like hours, there would be the most unspeakable agony while his flesh was slowly scorched off his bones.

Truly, the tortures which the Christians inflicted on each other made the Arab customs of beheading, drowning, or suffocating their enemies seem acts of pure humanity; or so it seemed to Jeronimo.

In fear and despair he turned for help to his own people—to the Sherifes, and the rich Arab Sheikhs and merchants who lived on and near the island. With their help he made a plot to free himself and his people from the yoke of the white men, to avenge his father's death and the insults he himself had received, and to assume the complete power to which he felt entitled.

II

Word went out secretly to the Moslems to be armed and ready on a certain date. They would be told later what to do.

It was the day of a Christian festival in Mombasa, and a special Mass was to be said in the Chapel of Our Lady of Sorrows, in Fort Jesus. Every Portuguese in the Island who could, came to the Fort. They walked through the great outer gates, up the dark tunnel and into the sunny courtyard. They passed on and

filed into the Chapel, crossing themselves with holy water at the door. The building was filled with praying people.

Don Jeronimo was there, a great cloak wrapped round him. With him were a number of Arabs, also wearing cloaks. The Chapel was small, and soon the crowd had overflowed into the courtyard. They greeted each other and chatted together whilst the cloaked Arabs stood against the walls, silently watching them.

Last of all came Governor Pedro Leitao de Gembao, followed by his handsome wife and their young daughter. The priest at the altar waited for him to be seated before beginning the service. The Governor looked in some surprise at the two or three hundred Arabs standing in the courtyard; but he knew Jeronimo's love of display, and he thought the Sultan had brought a bigger following than usual, to impress the Portuguese and the populace on this feast-day.

Governor and Sultan bowed to each other, and de Gembao advanced with his hand outstretched. Instantly Jeronimo whipped out a dagger and drove it into his heart. As the Governor fell, Jeronimo screamed in Arabic in a high, wild voice "Kill! Kill! Kill them all!" He turned on the priest, standing paralysed at the altar, and struck him down. There was complete silence for a few seconds; then the Arabs hurled themselves on the congregation, stabbing and slashing.

A fearful clamour of shouts and screams broke out as the helpless women and unarmed men tried in vain to escape. The Governor's wife and daughter had flung themselves over his corpse, the child shrieking in terror. Jeronimo dragged her up by the hair and stabbed her in the throat. Then he seized the mother with his bloody hands—crying "Take my faith and be my wife, and I will save you". Sick with horror, she tried to push him away—"Kill me, you dog," she cried, "I die in peace since she is safe who might have caused me anguish!"... Jeronimo cursed and struck her in the heart and she fell dead across the body of her husband.

The Arabs were running like madmen among the white people, hacking and stabbing. The Portuguese garrison tried to fight, but they were taken completely by surprise and cut down almost to a man. The courtyard had become a shambles, slippery with blood; filled with the dead and dying people and children,

lying tumbled about in their bright clothes like broken puppets. A handful of Portuguese soldiers and civilians rushed madly down the narrow passage and out of the main gate to the Augustinian monastery by the sea, where the great doors clanged to behind them.

Don Jeronimo Chingulia lifted his arms and called his Arabs to him. For the moment, the slaughter was over and there was no Christian left alive within the Fort. The Sultan, his eyes alight with a fanatical glare, cried out that he renounced the Christian faith and spat upon it; he was a Moslem like his forebears; he was Yussuf-bin-Hasan-bin-Ali, Sultan of Mombasa and Melinde.

He tore the ornaments from the altar and smashed them on the ground; dagger in hand he ran out into the streets, yelling to the Arabs to kill every Christian and Jew they could find. They raced through the town like a fire. Arab and native Christians met their deaths beside the white people. Men, women and babies were hacked to pieces. Some managed to save their lives by crying out that they were really Moslems and had renounced the Christian faith. Except for the monks in the monastery, and those few who had managed to reach them alive, not one white person survived on the island.

Within the monastery's massive walls there was a strange hush. The monks chanted before the altar, women and children, trembling and exhausted, lay sobbing quietly, while the men looked to their arms and said their prayers. They had very little hope, for all their people were dead; no ships could reach them for several weeks, and it was doubtful if their faithful friends in Melinde would come to their help this time, when their own Sultan was leading the revolt.

The dreadful din outside slowly subsided. The Arabs were tired after the slaughter, and for the moment they could find no more to kill.

III

Into the hands of Yussuf had fallen the beautiful Natalia de Sa and a few other Portuguese women. He had managed to

save their lives, and now he and his captains regarded them as booty. There was one other Christian prisoner, Yussuf's own uncle, an Arab named Dom Affonso. The women were shut in a room, heavily guarded, and the Moslem soldiers at the gates spat as they listened to them praying together.

Natalia said, "We cannot be rescued, my friends, and which of us wants to live, now that our men and our children are dead? Let us rather pray for courage and die as brave Portuguese should. Do not renounce your faith, nor yield your bodies to these murderous Moslems. Be brave, however you may be tempted. Be faithful unto death; your reward shall come in heaven, and your names will live for ever among our people." They were courageous women who, for love of their men, had followed them to this remote and dangerous country, fired with that same spirit which had lighted the hearts of their forerunners, the pioneers.

They determined to die together.

Presently Yussuf and his friends came to them, and formally offered them their lives if they would turn Moslems and become their wives. The women laughed at them. These were the last hours of their lives, as they well knew, and they meant to die gaily and gallantly. The angry Arabs seized them, but were met with an onslaught of teeth and nails and kicks, which took them completely by surprise, and infuriated them still more. The beautiful and stately Natalia became a wild cat in Yussuf's hands; she drew blood, and fought with a furious strength she never knew she possessed.

Dom Affonso, appalled at all that had happened, came to Yussuf and begged him, for his own honour's sake, not to degrade himself by the murder of the brave and defenceless women who were his prisoners, but to spare their lives and treat them with Arab chivalry. But Yussuf was mad with rage, memories of years of humiliation and frustration were seething within him, and his blood-lust was not nearly assuaged. He turned on his uncle and ordered him to renounce Christianity. Dom Affonso, as proud and fierce as any other Arab, haughtily refused. He was instantly taken away and killed.

By this time Yussuf's fury knew no bounds. He had the women tied up and carried to the water's edge. For the last time he offered them their lives, but they only lifted their eyes and

their bound hands to the sky, and began to sing a hymn. They were put into a boat and the native boatmen were ordered to row them to deep water, and then to throw them overboard. The boatmen were horrified, for the first frenzy and excitement of killing had died down, and this cold-blooded murder deeply shocked their naturally kind and easy-going natures. But they knew they must obey, or they themselves would die.

The boat, with its load of brightly-dressed, singing women, and silent, sickened natives, drew out from the shore. When the moment came to throw them into the water, the natives once more hesitated, but the sound of Yussuf's savage voice nerved them. They flung the women overboard. The singing changed to anguished shrieks, as they struggled and floated a few seconds, borne up by their wide skirts. Then there were swirls in the water as the sharks came, wilder screams, spreading pools of blood—and silence.

Yussuf's vengeance was now almost complete. Except for the little group in the monastery, no Christian survived. During the next few days he showed his extreme revulsion against Christianity by having cattle and goats driven into the Chapel of our Lady of Sorrows, feeling that their presence would still further desecrate the holy place. Although one would have expected some of his anger to have died down from sheer physical exhaustion and satiety, he had within him a fund of hatred which continuously fed the flames.

He attacked the monastery day after day, and at night he made the Arabs camp around it in a ring of fires, partly to prevent all possibility of escape, and partly to add to the terrors of the eighteen white people sheltering within the walls. The Portuguese continued to hold out. They still had a little food and water, but their ammunition was finished, the women and children were ill with shock and fear, and all believed they were doomed. By day they heard the Arabs yelling and jeering outside the gates, at night the fires shone brightly. On the fifth day their provisions were exhausted. Still they stayed where they were, hoping against hope that by some miracle their prayers would be granted and they would be rescued. But by the afternoon of the seventh day they were in extremes of thirst.

They called from a window that they wished to speak to Yussuf. This was what he had been waiting for. Sweet it was

to him to have these white people at his mercy, and to prolong their agony to the utmost limits. He kept them waiting a long time, and finally appeared outside the gates, seated in an ornate chair under an umbrella. The Portuguese spokesman said that for the sake of the women and children they were prepared to surrender, trusting to Arab chivalry, and on condition that the lives of all should be spared.

How many were there? asked Yussuf. Thirteen, was the reply. Yussuf pondered. His mind was made up long ago, but he wanted to savour the moment, and to keep the Portuguese in uncertainty as long as possible.

At last he said—"You shall be spared. You are the only Christians left alive. All, all the rest are dead, except four hundred slaves whom I shall sell in Muscat. You have been brave and you have suffered. Because I am a great Sultan and my heart is soft, I will let you live. Come out in half-an-hour and you shall go free."

They hardly dared to trust him, but there was nothing else they could do. They gathered together, trying to make themselves look a little less haggard and dishevelled than they were. The women smoothed their hair and their skirts, brushed the children, kissed and caressed them. They embraced each other and prayed, while the priests blessed them.

Four priests and one layman had elected to stay behind, saying they did not believe in Yussuf's promises. They preferred to take their chance of escape in disguise. They hid in the darkest recesses of the monastery, and later on slipped down to the water, found a boat, and reached Paté, where they were kindly received and sheltered.

The thirteen others stood ready, their hearts thudding with fear. Then the doors were opened and the pitiful little procession emerged. First came the monks glancing from side to side at the wall of hostile faces, trying to gauge the mood of these dangerous people. Then the women appeared, holding each others' hands or those of their children, and carrying the very little ones.

When they saw those small, suffering beings, the natives' hearts were touched, despite themselves, and some of them edged away from the scene. But Yussuf and the Arabs were imperturbable, their pale faces as hard as stones, their black eyes

glittering. Last of all came a handful of men. As the thirteen advanced through the lane of people there was a hush. They went slowly on, not knowing which way to turn.

Suddenly Yussuf raised his hand, and a flight of arrows struck the Portuguese. Some fell and lay writhing, others began to run, the women trying to shelter the children with their own bodies. More and more arrows hit them, and in a few moments all were down, dead or dying at the feet of their triumphant murderers.

Yussuf rose, trembling a little. He looked at the last of his enemies, at the twisting bodies of the women and the children. Then he returned slowly and with dignity to his Sultanate.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

1631-1635

I

YUSSUF-BIN-HASAN-BIN-ALI, Sultan of Mombasa and Melinde, conqueror of the Island of War and the neighbouring coast, now set about consolidating his position. He knew the Portuguese too well not to realize that they would try by every means in their power to avenge their dead. From now on there would be war to the death between him and them. Meanwhile he meant to obliterate all the Christians on the coast, as far as his power should reach.

But that power was not so great as he had imagined. Gone were the days when Melinde, Lamu and Paté, Kilwa and Zanzibar and Pemba, trembled before the terror which was Mombasa. The far-away islands had seen too much of powerful Portuguese weapons and clever Portuguese administrators to be anxious to indulge in massacres which they knew would bring trouble on their heads. Who was he to give them orders—this Sultan of Mombasa who had already changed his religion twice, who had done everything to provoke the Portuguese to fury; and who only controlled—when all was said and done—a small army and an insignificant stretch of territory?

One or two little towns, such as Tanga and Mtangata rose against their few Portuguese inhabitants and killed them.

But Zanzibar, the beautiful, rich and civilized, took no notice of the renegade sheikh; Pemba followed her lead; Lamu thoughtfully recalled a former punishment; and Paté, whose record of friendship with the Portuguese was no longer unblemished, kept as quiet as possible and hoped that the few outrages which had been committed there would be overlooked. This, however, did not save her from the wrath to come.

So, except for the unfortunates slaughtered in Mombasa and in a few other towns, the Portuguese were left in peace—though those in the far-away country districts must have spent many sleepless nights listening for strange sounds in the dark-

ness—distant voices raised in fanatical shouts, or the stealthy approach of naked feet.

When news of the Mombasa massacre reached Goa, the fury of the Portuguese knew no bounds. Dom Miguel de Noronha, the Viceroy of the East, called on his sea captains to prepare their ships, on his army commanders to summon their men, that he might send an avenging fleet which would punish the murderers in a way the coast and islands would never forget.

The men in charge of the expedition were Francisco de Moura, and the Viceroy's own son. The chief pilot was a Frenchman from Honfleur named Pierre Berthelot, one of the greatest sailors and navigators of his day. He carefully charted the seas of the Azanian coast, and some of his maps are now in the British Museum, others in Paris. For a while he sailed under the flag of his own country, then transferred his services to Holland. The Portuguese, great seamen themselves, held him in high honour, and were always trying to lure him into their own navy.

At last they succeeded. Pierre served them faithfully and well—not only at sea but also during expeditions ashore, when he made such scientific studies and geographical surveys as could be achieved at that period.

In 1631 the fleet sailed from Goa for Mombasa. There were several galliots, one pinnace, and twenty-five transports carrying six hundred soldiers, besides their ships' crews, who were also fighting men.

In due course the Portuguese vessels arrived at the little island of Faza. There they heard again the tragic story of the Christians of Mombasa, and collected such information as they could concerning Yussuf's forces, ships and arms.

In Faza they were joined by three more ships and a hundred men, sent by Ruy Freire de Andrade, Governor of Muscat. Further reinforcements arrived from other towns and villages, brave and angry men, many of whom had lost their friends and relations at Yussuf's hands.

The well-found fleet and the well-armed forces bore down on Mombasa. Yussuf's look-outs saw them coming—high-prowed, square-sailed ships moving purposefully along the coast; turning westward to sail through the reef and then slowly, relentlessly,



Photograph by Fergus Wilson

Fishing Canoes in Zanzibar.



Photograph by Fergus Wilson

Through a Zanzibar Doorway.

approaching the wharves of Mombasa Harbour. The Arab guns from Fort St. Joseph fired at them, and the ships replied. From the battlements of Fort Jesus—where now flew the red flag of Islam—“Red with our blood,” thought the Portuguese grimly—came cannon balls to welcome them as they dropped anchor. The ships hove to in the harbour, furled their sails, and prepared to wait while the white men laid siege to what had once been their own stronghold.

When they landed there was no opposition. The harbour was deserted, the streets empty, the shops closed; and, the massive, spiked doors of the tall Arab dwelling-houses were fast-locked. From behind lattice-work windows frightened women and anxious men watched the steel-helmeted, leather-jerkined Portuguese troops march up the main road towards the fort, where Yussuf and his soldiers stood at bay.

As the attackers reached Fort Jesus a hail of arrows fell upon them—with no effect, for such light-weight weapons could not penetrate the men’s padded jerkins, or the officers’ steel armour.

“Oh, Moslem hyenas,” they called up to the Arabs, whose white-turbaned heads they could see over the tops of the walls—“we are not helpless women and children to be struck down by your little weapons. You sons of snakes and crocodiles, you murderers of babies; when we have reached you your own mothers will wail for the day they bore you.”

The Arabs responded with suitable invective, and the Portuguese prepared for a long siege. But Yussuf was ready. Fort Jesus was stocked with large quantities of food and weapons, while the well in the courtyard produced an inexhaustible supply of drinking water. The Arabs could afford to jeer from the ramparts of the almost impregnable fortress which the Portuguese had built so carefully, and had been so proud of.

For garrison Yussuf had about two hundred Arabs and Swahili; and as many Wanyika warriors from the mainland—wild little men armed with bows and arrows, and throwing clubs. They were not very brave, but they could not get away. So the tribesmen yelled as fiercely as anyone, danced up and down uttering dreadful threats, and shot their arrows harmlessly at the well-padded Portuguese soldiery. A more serious menace were Yussuf’s allies, the Mozungolos. Though they

had killed his father, he found he was forced to be friendly towards them. They called themselves his vassals, but it was he who paid tribute to them—cruel and clever though he was, he found that the only way he could keep them in control was by bribing them with—ironically enough—presents of cloth. Indeed, the Arabs along the coast lived almost as though they were the prisoners of these murderous natives, constantly buying their own lives and safety with rolls of material.

They were a perpetual menace, with their insatiable demands, and their arrows tipped with deadly poison, but when they came over to attack the Portuguese, they were of undoubted help to Yussuf.

During the siege of Fort Jesus they nearly succeeded in killing Dom Francisco da Moura, who had captured a house on the outskirts of the town. "Three battalions of blacks beset the house," says Rezende. Twenty-eight of the defenders were killed, and many more wounded. Dom Francisco was struck by twenty-four arrows, some of which were poisoned. His life was saved by a devoted servant who quickly sucked the wounds. His master lived but he himself died from the poison.

The siege went on for three months. The Portuguese sadly realized that they had built their castle all too well. It was impossible to capture it by direct assault, and to starve Yussuf out might take years. Yussuf and his men were full of confidence, well fed and well armed; they were certain that the patience of the besiegers would soon be exhausted, and that they would depart and leave them in peace.

And this was indeed what happened. Francisco de Moura and young de Noronha were both agreed that it was useless to continue the siege. Disheartened and humiliated, they withdrew their men and sailed away to the accompaniment of volleys of arrows and jeers from their enemies.

The Arabs were jubilant; but Yussuf, despite his triumph, did not forget all he had learned about the Portuguese during the years they had been his friends and teachers. He knew their courage and perseverance. He knew that the sovereign who reigned over the sister-kingdoms of Spain and Portugal was a rich and powerful monarch, more than capable of annihilating the Sultan of two small towns on the coast of East Africa, should

he ever bend his mind to such a task. Yussuf was no fool; he expected the Portuguese to return, and he made his preparations accordingly.

When the Portuguese sailed away, they left two ships blocking the mouth of the harbour. For many weeks they lay there preventing all vessels from approaching or leaving the island. But when the monsoon came roaring down the Indian Ocean and the turbulent seas rose like crested hills, the crews found it increasingly uncomfortable on board, anchored as the ships were. Finally the men abandoned ship, rowed to the shore and started on the long trek to Zanzibar.

Yussuf now saw his chance. He sent a party out to board the empty vessels, had them towed to the harbour and made fast to the wharves.

All this time Yussuf was tiring of Mombasa, where he had never been happy. True, he had enjoyed moments of triumph, revenge, and gratified vanity, and of passionate blood-lust satiated by the deaths of his enemies. But the pleasure engendered by these moments did not last. His life was now but one turbulent situation after the other. He felt the future to be full of menace.

Perhaps, also, he remembered uneasily the bleeding bodies and staring eyes of the women and children he had murdered. Treacherous as the male Arabs of that date were among themselves, they did not normally make war on women and the very young. Yussuf may have felt that he had earned the disapproval of those whom he most wished to impress.

He decided to leave Mombasa, and sail to the Yemen, where he hoped to be well received by the Arabs of that desolate strip of land. They might appreciate the unique qualities of the man who had driven the Christians out of Mombasa.

For days and nights strong island natives trotted to and fro between the fort and the ships, carrying on their bowed backs loads of cloth and silks; jewellery, daggers and swords; long-barrelled guns, bags of powder, hundreds of sacks of gold and silver coins; necklaces, ear-rings, anklets, armlets and even the cannon from the fort.

The people of Mombasa watched these preparations with mixed feelings. The Arabs knew the Portuguese would punish them harshly for their part in the massacres, and many wished to go to the Yemen with Yussuf, in order to escape the coming

vengeance. The natives had less to fear, since they were not the instigators of the crimes. Besides, the Portuguese would need labour to run the island and tend the coconut trees and gardens; and they would have to use the natives and slaves for these tasks.

They awaited the return of the white men with equanimity. They hoped for a period of quiet and prosperity. All they wanted was to see the last of the Sultan and his Arabs; and to fish and cultivate their gardens and collect the precious coconuts in peace.

But Yussuf had one more shock in store for the natives. The fact that they had been obedient citizens under his rule did not for a moment deter him from his supreme intent—to leave nothing but desolation behind him for the returning Portuguese. What he had in mind meant ruin and starvation for the natives, but that was of no significance to him.

Just before he embarked, Yussuf had all the coconut trees cut down, the fruit trees rooted out, the gardens and little farms destroyed. At the last moment he set the town alight. The wooden houses roared up in flames, and many lost their lives in the holocaust. The survivors, in despair, watched their homes blazing and their means of livelihood being utterly ruined.

Yussuf sailed away, satisfied with the destruction he had accomplished. Nothing, he thought with pleasure, would now be left for the Portuguese. The fort was empty, the guns gone, the town burnt, and the palm trees and gardens would take years to grow again. Many of the people were dead, while even now, he hoped, more were dying in the fire. He had left his mark on Mombasa. He had avenged himself.

II

Word came to Zanzibar that Mombasa had again been destroyed and that Yussuf had gone. The Portuguese captain of one of the abandoned ships journeyed thither and took control of the island. He found complete chaos; but, as their habit was, the long-suffering islanders soon began to rebuild their homes and replant their groves and gardens. They were

genuinely glad to see the Portuguese captain and his handful of white sailors.

The old men and the leaders of the native communities came to him and told him long stories of Yussuf's crimes, of how he at first had led the people astray, and then profoundly shocked them; and of how, under his rule, they had lost the extra food and medical care to which the Portuguese had accustomed them.

So the white men and the black ones worked together to repair the ravaged town, and slowly they succeeded.

Meanwhile Yussuf had reached the Yemen safely. The Arabs did not welcome him very warmly, but neither did they molest him. Once more he tasted the bitterness of frustrated self-importance. He had expected to be treated as a conqueror, and a hero in Islam; but perhaps the people of the Yemen did not greatly admire this man of changing religions, who had deliberately slaughtered women and children, and then, seeing danger approaching, had run away.

After a time Yussuf left the Yemen and returned to the Azanian coast. He again stirred up trouble among the islanders; and there were sporadic outbursts of violence against the Portuguese in Paté and Siu, Lamu, Manda and Pemba.

The truth was that the islanders were too frightened of Yussuf to deny him, for he had by now acquired a reputation for murder and destruction which terrified them.

A second fleet, despatched from Goa to recapture Mombasa, had arrived to find that turbulent place in ruins, its people cowed and—for the moment—completely pro-Portuguese. This force did not waste time in hunting Yussuf, who had disappeared into the arid wastes of the Yemen. Instead, all the energies of the white men were turned to the rehabilitation of Mombasa. Only when Yussuf emerged from his retreat and began making trouble again did the Portuguese try to capture him. But there are endless hiding-places among the creeks and inlets and bays which intersect the coast, and it was easy for Yussuf to slip from place to place in the dark and so avoid his pursuers. The natives were too much in awe of him ever to give him away.

He fled south until he reached Madagascar. Here he entrenched himself in a stronghold on the coast, a town originally

founded by emigrants from Paté. Again his Portuguese training stood him in good stead. With care and foresight he laid in enough stocks of food and weapons to withstand a long siege, and there, in the fortress, he awaited the Portuguese. News of his whereabouts reached Mozambique. Rogue Borges at once equipped a fleet and set sail for Madagascar, filled with delight at the prospect of being the one who might finally capture Portugal's bitterest enemy. All the way to Madagascar he and his captains planned the siege, discussed Yussuf's possible defences, and devised various means of protracted death which each man hoped to be able to inflict on Yussuf.

When Rogue Borges and his men reached the island, they realized with dismay that it was going to be as difficult to dislodge Yussuf from his present stronghold, as it had proved impossible to drive him from Fort Jesus. They laid siege to the castle, but soon saw they could not take it. All the crestfallen Portuguese achieved was the capture of a few guns and stores. They finally raised the siege and sailed away leaving the triumphant Yussuf and his Arabs still in possession of the fortress.

All this time the Portuguese had been vigorously rebuilding their forts and re-establishing their prestige along the coast. In 1635 there came to Mombasa an energetic young man, twenty-seven years old, by the name of Francisco de Seixas de Cabreira. He was put in charge of the whole coast, with instructions to reduce the rebellious people to complete subjection. He began by rebuilding Fort Jesus, and as soon as that work was well under way, he undertook punitive expeditions along the coast and among the islands. From Paté in the north to Pemba in the south, Cabreira punished and pillaged and burned; executing the guilty and exacting heavy tribute from the chastised and humbled towns.

Though naturally friendly creatures, the natives were ruled by fear rather than by love. They respected the strong hand of the new Commander. This was a language they understood. Just as they had lived peacefully with the Portuguese settlers, and received the Portuguese refugees with kindness, only to turn on them at the orders of the dreaded Yussuf, so now they humbled themselves before Cabreira, admitted their sins, begged for forgiveness, and promised loyalty in the future. They meant

what they said at the moment, and for the time being there was no more trouble.

Having punished the guilty, Cabreira set himself to the task of re-establishing trade and normal life in Mombasa. Back came the monks, the doctors, the farmers and the administrators. Settlers were brought from Paté and Lamu and from Faza—that strange little island with its strong proportion of Portuguese blood flowing through the black people.

White women were shipped from Goa; new settlers were invited to come from Portugal and make their homes in this rich and fertile land. Indian merchants, called Banians, reopened their shops and brought trade-goods from their mother-country. Jewish traders and usurers reappeared, and in no time were the financial masters of many improvident Arab and native land-owners. Once again the streets of Mombasa were thronged with Portuguese soldiers and civilians, while the shops were piled high with spices and vegetables and fruits, materials from India, a few rare household treasures from Portugal, medicines and books and all the aids to comfort which white people take with them to wild places.

Fort Jesus brooded protectively over the island: repaired, rearmed and with its devastated chapel reconsecrated.

Francisco Cabreira proudly caused the following inscription to be carved over the outer gates of the fort, where it can still be read:

In 1635 Captain-Major Francisco de Seixas de Cabreira, Commander of this Fortress for four years, being twenty-seven years of age, rebuilt it and constructed this Guard House. He again subdued to His Majesty the Coast of Malindi which had rebelled in favour of the tyrant, and he made the Kings of Otendo, Mandra, Luziva and Jaca tributary; he personally inflicted on Paté and Siu a punishment hitherto unknown in India even to the razing of their walls; he punished the Muzungulos, chastised Pemba and its rebellious people, putting to death on his own responsibility the rebel kings and all the principal chiefs, he caused to be paid the tribute which all had refused to His Majesty. For all these services he was made Gentleman of the Royal Household, having already been rewarded for former services the Decoration of

the Order of Christ, with a pension of 50,000 Reis, six years Government of Jafampata, and four years of Biligao, with authority of being empowered to fill all the Posts during his lifetime.

For a time there was peace. The people were tired of bloodshed and excitement. All they wanted was to grow crops, catch fish, and live quietly.

III

These halcyon days, however, could not last. Intrigue was the breath of life to the Arabs and Swahili; they were never happy for long without hatching plots, and causing a constant change of rulers. On these occasions, the Portuguese threw in their lot with those whom they thought would be their friends.

At Paté there was frequent fighting between members of the ruling family over the Sultanship. During one of these typical feuds the Portuguese intervened, and placed on the throne a Sultan called Abubakr, known to be a loyal friend of theirs. When trouble broke out at Lamu, he helped them to subdue that city. By a stroke of statesmanship he also persuaded them to hand over to him the Lamu men they had captured, and these he sent home free and safe, on condition that the elders of Lamu should henceforth acknowledge him as their overlord.

This they agreed to. But a few years later the people of Paté displaced Sultan Abubakr in favour of a Sultan Muhammad, whose son, Bwana Mkuu, had married Abubakr's daughter. Very soon the Portuguese contrived to split Muhammad's faction, and Abubakr was restored to his throne, while Muhammad stayed under lock and key until he died. The islanders tried to set Bwana Mkuu against his father-in-law, and, failing in this reversed the process. They assured Abubakr that Mkuu meant to kill him, and take the throne.

Abubakr turned to his friends the Portuguese for help, and together they made a plan. When the Governor of Mombasa arrived in pomp on a visit to Paté, Bwana Mkuu and forty of

his friends were entertained on board one of the Portuguese ships. They were plied with drink until they were helpless. Then the ship sailed away with them to Goa, whence they never returned.

Three years later, the fickle islanders suddenly decided to get rid of Abubakr, though he had ruled them well and wisely. They "rushed in on Sultan Abubakr, smiting him and his brother, Bwana Madi—killing them both."

Thus the Portuguese, trading, farming, intriguing and backing one princeling against another, kept their hold on Azania until all traces of Yussuf's revolt and brief reign had disappeared.

Meanwhile, Yussuf's restless nature was driving him from Madagascar. His power and influence had gone. Homage was no longer paid him, and his incitements to revolt passed unheeded. He was not even feared. He decided to return to the Yemen, hoping that there, maybe, amongst those fanatical Moslems, he would find followers to help him to drive the Portuguese out of Muscat. He set sail from Madagascar one autumn, on the south-easterly monsoon. He had very few adherents now, and only the one ship.

News travelled slowly in those days; it was not until long after he had started that the Portuguese heard that he had slipped away and was safely on the high seas. He kept well to the eastward, out of harm's way.

He sailed up the Indian Ocean, touching at Aden where he paused awhile and restocked his ship before continuing north towards Jeddah. He may have meant to make the pilgrimage to Mecca whence he could return with the title of Hadji, and wearing the green turban. No one then could regard him as anything but an ardent follower of the Prophet, his prestige would increase; he might even become again the feared leader of Moslem fighters and the scourge of the Portuguese.

But Fate had another design for him. One day an Arab pirate boat appeared like a black bird of prey, and bore swiftly down on the lone ship. Yussuf's well-armed men fought for their lives. But the professional Arab sea-raiders were more than a match for any ship's crew. Over the side the pirates came swarming—wild, half-naked, fiercer than leopards. They slaughtered the Madagascans, and cut down Yussuf as he stood on the poop, fighting to the last. His battles and murders and moments of

power, his ambitions and hopes for the future, all ended in death at the hands of a few nameless bandits. The pirates knew nothing of Yussuf, nor would they have cared if they had. They threw his body overboard along with the rest, loaded his jewels and goods into their own ship and returned home, well pleased with the day's work.

CHAPTER TWELVE

1635-1668

I

ALTHOUGH the Portuguese were strongly entrenched on the Azanian coast and in Goa, their northern defences were beginning to crack. The strategic island of Ormuz had already fallen to the Persians, and now the Omani Arabs gathered their strength together to drive the white men from their peninsula for ever. The Imam Nasur headed the rising.

With his tribesmen he attacked and took one little fortified town after another. Lucky were those Portuguese who died fighting, for the survivors were often tortured to death, or shipped away as slaves to the lost and lonely towns which stood in the burning sun on the shores of the Persian Gulf. The Imam laid siege to Muscat; but here the Portuguese managed to hold out, and he had to retire from the capital, licking his wounds.

The Portuguese in Muscat were in a grim position. Behind them stood a range of arid mountains and beyond that a waste of desert. To the north stretched the Gulf of Oman and the pirate-haunted Persian Gulf, while a strong Persian garrison held Ormuz. To the south lay only sun-drenched sand and isolated little towns, where the bones of Portuguese soldiers lay bleaching, and the red flag of Islam flew above the walls.

Before them spread the shark-infested sea.

Sometimes they were reassured by the sight of ships from Goa, with crosses on their sails, guns along their decks, and their fellow-countrymen lining the rails. But all too often, only tall-masted dhows were to be seen, passing just out of range of the Portuguese guns, and manned by their enemies.

Month after month the garrison of Muscat watched the glittering ocean. Those who were relieved and taken to Goa for a rest must have felt that they were turning their backs on death. Those who took their places knew that they must be ready to fight for their lives at any moment. And so for years the Portuguese kept a precarious foothold in Arabia, unable

to win the friendship of the Arabs, unable to trust any single one of the people amongst whom they were living, and as time went on, increasingly aware of the Arab's burning desire to drive them from Oman.

In 1649 the Imam Nasur died and was succeeded by Sultan-bin-Seif-bin-Malik, the second Imam of the Yarubi dynasty. The new ruler was young and energetic. He was determined to turn the Portuguese out of Arabia, and proclaimed a Holy War. Down from the mountains came the tribesmen, armed with little but their wide, curved swords and slender spears.

Along the coast every town and village sent forth its band of warriors. War dhows and trading dhows assembled in the ports. Hundreds of horsemen gathered, mounted on weedy, wiry animals as wild-eyed as their riders.

The Portuguese knew they were doomed. The ships they sent for help never reached their destinations, they were caught and burned by pirates before ever they cleared the Gulf of Oman. The white soldiers did what their forebears had always done when faced with inevitable annihilation. They confessed, took the sacrament, prayed, and saw to their arms.

Yet the attack did not come at once, and tension inside the fort eased a little. The story goes that, during the waiting period, the Portuguese Commander fell in love with the daughter of an Indian merchant living in Muscat. But the girl would have none of him, and her father found the Commander's persistent demands for her hand tedious. In vain he explained that it was not fitting for the two races to mingle, that his daughter, a Hindu, could not outrage her gods by changing her faith, that no good or happiness would ever come of such a match.

The Portuguese would not take "No" for an answer. In spite of the danger confronting them all; in spite of his duty to the men under his command, it seemed he could think of nothing but this Indian girl, whose father was so bigoted and obstinate. However, the merchant did not waver, but suggested that the whole matter should be put off for a year, by which time the girl might have changed her mind, and all their circumstances have improved.

"This is no time to talk of marriage," said the wise old Indian; "let us rather look to the town's defences. For a long time now you have not inspected the food, the water, or the

ammunition. Your enemies are all about you, but there may yet be time before they attack, to put our stores in good order. I have myself examined the tanks and the rest. The water is foul, the food full of maggots, and the powder dirty. If, sir, you will allow me to see to these matters, I can promise you that within a short time everything shall be cleaned and replenished. I might even, by going through the town, find more stores of grain which these people may have hidden away, and which, with your authority, I will requisition. This is a moment when our fighting-men's stomachs are of the first importance; the troops must be properly cared for, and the civilians will have to put up with a few discomforts, for once."

The Commander agreed immediately. He was not interested in his men's rations, for he himself lived in quite a different style to theirs, but he thought he saw in the Indian's suggestion a neat way of slipping a fair amount of Government money into the old man's pocket, and of putting him under an obligation which might make him incline more favourably towards the Commander's matrimonial designs. He thought, perhaps, the Indian's former reluctance might just have been some subtle Oriental way of obtaining a bribe.

So he gave him a free hand and retired to his own apartments.

The Indian at once had all the water tanks drained dry. He mixed sand with the powder, so that it was quite useless, and stirred dust into the grain, making it inedible. He sent a note to Imam Sultan saying he must attack at once, that the Portuguese had nothing but wine to drink, and were incapable of defending themselves.

Sultan flung his men at the castle. Here and there the Portuguese fought, but most of them were so drunk, having nothing with which to quench their thirst but wine, that they could offer no resistance. Their powder was useless; their guns would not fire. The Arabs rushed the gates and flung them open, and the waiting cavalry came galloping in.

There was a wild turmoil of plunging horses and flashing blades, but the Portuguese were incapable of further fighting, and in a few moments they were all dead or prisoners.

Sultan gazed about him. His pride rose as he realized that the city of Muscat, so long in thrall to the infidels, was free at

last, and that he, young as he was, had freed her. As he stood thus, a message was brought to him. It was from the Portuguese Commander, who had thought it wisest during the fighting, to stay in his own quarters with a few friends. Everything had been so sudden that he did not think he would be missed, and he hoped now his life might be spared. He offered to surrender, provided he and those with him were not killed.

Contemptuous of such unsoldierly behaviour, Sultan ordered them to emerge; and so the man who might have held Muscat for the Portuguese came humbly towards his Arab conqueror, begging for mercy.

The Arabs tore down the Christian flag and raised their own; then they demolished the chapel and made a bonfire of the holy images and pictures.

Thus Muscat fell.

II

So ended the Portuguese hold in the North. This decisive victory of the Moslems over the Christians in Arabia awoke the hopes of all the subject towns on the East African Coast. Never satisfied for long with their rulers, whether Portuguese or Arab; always believing (forgetful of past experience) that a change must be for the better—bored, perhaps, with the comparative peace and prosperity which accompanied the Portuguese régime, and loving the excitement of something new—the people of Mombasa sent their usual piteous and desperate pleas for help to Imam Sultan of Oman.

The Imam was only too ready to become a Great Conqueror, the Hope of Islam, and to enlarge his rather meagre kingdom. Two years after the fall of Muscat, he had collected enough ships and arms to form a small but powerful fleet. With this he sailed east and made a feint at Bombay, but found that town altogether too well defended. He turned west again and arrived unexpectedly at Paté. Here the islanders, always ready to side with the strongest, willingly ranged themselves behind the fierce, commanding Arabs.

They turned on the Portuguese settlers and slaughtered them.

Sultan went on to Zanzibar. He would have liked to attack Mombasa, but with his present force, he knew this was out of the question. In Zanzibar, the Omani found that the present head of the Mwenyi Mkuu dynasty was a queen named Mwena Mwema, whose son was then growing to manhood. The Omani Arabs had little trouble in persuading or frightening her into acquiescence. The Zanzibari rose against the Portuguese, killed the white people and imprisoned four hundred native Christians in what had once been a Portuguese church.

After these exploits, Imam Sultan returned to his kingdom of Oman to refit his ships and increase the size of his navy. He had acquired a good deal of loot during his forays and now he was able to collect more vessels, arms and men. He made his preparations carefully, meaning to attack Mombasa in such force that the town must fall.

In Mombasa there was great unrest among the natives, and relations were not improved by the undisciplined behaviour of the Portuguese troops. They would go swashbuckling through the streets at night, visiting the local wine shops and drinking until they could hold no more. They pushed aside the Arabs and kicked the natives out of their way whenever they might be on the path. Any girl they fancied was carried off into the fort. Not all of the girls, needless to say, were unwilling victims. Many of them became, like the Sabine women, devoted to their captors. But their parents and the older people objected to this side-stepping of the beneficial custom of paying bride-price. Beneath the surface of the island's life resentment smouldered like a fire in the roots of a dying tree.

Living in Mombasa about this time was a priest called Miguel; a saintly man who loved the natives and had many friends among them. He was attached to the chapel in the fort, but in order to be nearer the people and learn their language and customs better, he hired a little hut in the town. He often intervened between the natives and the Portuguese troops, when the latter had committed some fresh outrage.

But he was not always successful in keeping the peace, and then he would return to his hut, fingering his beads and shaking his head, while the soldiers went roaring off, full of drink, carrying a girl or two, and jeering at the strait-laced priest. Relations between the Christians and the rest got more and

more strained, until the inevitable plots began to be hatched round the coffee-tables, and in dark corners of the bazaar.

The people of the Island of War, said the agitators grandiosely, would rise again, kill any soldiers they caught in the streets, call on the Northern Arabs to help them, and either storm or besiege Fort Jesus until they had driven out the Portuguese. News of this design came to the ears of an old Swahili lady, a friend of Father Miguel. She feared for his safety, as well she might, for when the Islanders were roused they cared for neither friend nor foe whilst their fury lasted. She could not be seen going into the priest's hut herself, so she hastily composed a little rhyme, which she told a slave girl to sing outside Miguel's window.

Translated, it went something like this:

White man Miguel—you are wrong,
You have been blind for very long.
You leave the soldiers in the Fort
To live with Danger in the Court?

It was evening. The girl stood outside Miguel's hut and sang her song over and over again. At first the nasal whine meant nothing to the priest, but after a time the meaning of the constantly repeated words suddenly struck him. In a flash he understood that he was in danger—that they were all in danger. He left the hut, pressing a coin into the girl's hand as he passed her and whispering his thanks.

He hurried to the fort and told the sentry at the gate that there would be a rising at any moment—they must shut the gates—they must man the walls without delay! The sentry laughed at him. Father Miguel, taken aback, hurried through the yard calling his news to the men standing idly about. No one took the slightest notice. He was not popular with the soldiers, and when he demanded to be taken to the commanding officer, they refused roughly, saying that he was resting and not to be disturbed.

Miguel, in despair, opened his mouth to shout aloud his frightening news—but at that moment a fearful clamour broke out in the town. The people had set upon some drunken soldiers and beaten them to death. A mob gathered instantly and ran towards the fort, yelling wildly and brandishing sticks and

swords. Just in time, the gates were slammed shut, men ran to their posts and officers rushed from their quarters. Miguel heard the thud of stones against the gates, he listened to the hysterical screaming of the people, suddenly mad for blood—and his heart failed him.

He was not a soldier, but a priest. He was a kind man, not a brave one. He quickly stepped over the side of the courtyard well, and clambered down the steps to the dank darkness below. Above the level of fresh water at the bottom of the pit was set the mouth of the tunnel which ran down a slope to Fort St. Joseph. When the tide came in, salt water flowed for a certain distance along the tunnel, as Miguel knew, reaching just high enough to drown a man who might be chained to the walls.

But now the tide was out, and Miguel felt that here lay his only chance of escaping certain death. He struggled along the dark and slippery way, passed drooping skeletons still hanging by their manacles from the rock, until he saw before him the blessed light of day. At last he climbed to the surface, pushed through the bush which grew at the tunnel's entrance and emerged once more into the fresh salt air. Not far out a merchant vessel lay at anchor. Miguel called to a fisherman sitting half asleep in his outrigger canoe, and was soon safe and sound on board the ship. He never returned to Mombasa, but his name lives in the song which is still sung in the streets of that ancient, legend-haunted town.

The rising was quelled and the angry townspeople relapsed again into their usual state of uneasy, muttering quiet. But Lisbon, now once more in the hands of a Portuguese king, was extremely anxious over the state of affairs in her Eastern Empire. The vital Arabian ports had gone; the garrison at Goa was too weak or too idle, or both, to send proper reinforcements to Mombasa; discipline among Portuguese troops and trustworthy allies among the Arab nobles were equally things of the past.

Francisco de Cabreira was recalled from India and appointed to his old post in Mombasa. He was now a man of 45, capable, steady and determined. He sailed from India full of hopes, expecting to find well-armed men and well-found ships with which to re-establish order along the coast and among the islands. But when he reached Mombasa there were only a few boats and a disorderly rabble of dirty soldiers to greet him.

De Cabreira pulled them into some sort of shape, but the men at his disposal were too few and too slack for him to think of chastising the Omani, still less of recapturing Muscat. His whole army consisted of 120 Portuguese, 120 Malindi men and 40 soldiers from India.

Nevertheless, with this tiny force, de Cabreira set out to punish the rebels. He attacked and captured Zanzibar and drove away the Queen and her son. He marched to the jail and released the four hundred terrified Christians imprisoned there, who had lived in daily expectation of death, and most of whom, to save themselves, had turned Mohammedan. Then he destroyed the town and sailed on to Pemba, where he repeated the punishment he had inflicted on the rebellious island eighteen years before.

He went to Paté, Faza and Lamu, showing the flag and receiving tribute and assurances of loyalty from the wary and experienced inhabitants. Then he sailed back to Mombasa, handed over to the Governor a force of disciplined soldiers, and returned to his own duties in Goa.

III

The Portuguese in Mombasa, knowing full well the menace that was approaching them from the north, prepared for war.

In 1660 Imam Sultan of Oman put to sea. He landed on Paté, where the Islanders welcomed him. He attacked and captured Faza, sailed on to Melinde and conquered that loyal town. Through all the vicissitudes of the Portuguese on the Azanian Coast, through all their troubles and dangers and successes, Melinde had remained true to them. Only once had she failed to come to their aid, and that was when her own Sultan, Yussuf-bin-Hasan, had turned against them.

Now Melinde suffered again for her loyalty to her old friends. Imam Sultan looted and destroyed the town, showing no mercy to the civilian population.

Having crippled the two towns who might have tried to help the Portuguese, Imam Sultan felt the moment had come to attack Mombasa. One day, the Portuguese look-outs on Fort Jesus saw the sight they had been expecting and dreading. A

fleet of dhows came sailing towards them. Spread far across the glittering ocean, the Arab ships of war converged on Mombasa.

They sailed through the reef, and dropped anchor in the harbour. Then came a repetition of those scenes which had taken place so many times on these war-torn shores. The Arabs landed, were repulsed and advanced again; houses caught fire, people fled into the bush, natives and island Arabs fought on opposing sides—for many of the inhabitants were sincerely devoted to the white men and now showed their loyalty. The fighting dragged on. Frequently the Arabs withdrew to the mainland and rested for a time, while the Portuguese made forays for food and repaired some of the damaged strong points from which they were defending the town.

Portuguese ships arrived at various times with men, weapons and medical supplies. If there happened to be many dhows about when a Portuguese vessel approached, she would withdraw before they set upon her. Sometimes the dhows were away on business of their own, and then the tired but dogged garrison could welcome those who came to their relief. But reinforcements only appeared at rare intervals, for the truth was that both Goa and Mozambique were so depleted of ships and men that they could send but token supplies. Gradually Imam Sultan gained control of most of the island. Fort St. Joseph fell, and the Portuguese at last found themselves hemmed into Fort Jesus and a small portion of the town adjoining its walls.

As Imam Sultan's successes came to be known, more and more dhows sailed south from Muscat, their captains eager to be in at the kill, and to get their hands on some loot. In the interior of Oman, sheiks gathered their armies of ragged cut-throats together, collected what weapons they could, descended on Muscat and squatted on the shore, ready to cram themselves into any sort of ship bound for Mombasa.

There were infidels to be killed there—gold in this world and merit in the next to be acquired. By this time the whole coast north of Mombasa was in the hands of the Omani. Gone were the Portuguese villas and gardens, their owners dead or fled, their walls quickly swallowed in the jungle which grows with almost visible speed when the restraining hand of man is removed. Roots as big as pythons thrust through cracks in the walls; lush green creepers covered the stones with their heavy

leaves. The tidy plots of flowers and vegetables were ruined; the natives now grew only enough for their own needs, since trade had come to a standstill wherever the tide of battle flowed.

The Mazrui, a strong and ambitious family of Mombasa Arabs, were fighting side by side with Imam Sultan. They had no intention of being ruled by Northern Arabs any more than they were content to be under the Portuguese, but for the moment they kept quiet about their plans. Now were laid the seeds of future years of battle and murder, such as seemed to be Mombasa's destiny. Naturally each faction was thinking only of its own interests. The Portuguese struggled to hold what they had conquered long ago. Sultan fought to increase his kingdom and prestige, the Mazrui meant to be the sole rulers of Mombasa and the coast.

Melinde lay quiet under the heel of the Arabs, and the strange, hidden city of Gedi still lived its secret and silent life, deep in the forest.

No help came from Portugal.

IV

In the year 1640, John, Duke of Braganza, had dispossessed the Spaniards by a sudden revolution, and had mounted the throne as John IV. Under his reign the Portuguese began to regain their self-confidence and pride. His son and successor, Alfonso VI was only thirteen years old when his father died. The Queen-Mother, Dona Luisa, acted as one of the regents, whilst for many years the war against Spain continued. France had been Portugal's ally, but she made a separate peace with Spain, while at the same time continuing secretly to give help to Portugal, and the dauntless little country was thus able to continue the fight.

In 1663 King Charles II of England, restored to the throne of his murdered father, was looking round for a Queen. The Portuguese eagerly suggested their own Princess, Catherine of Braganza. Her dowry was to be £500,000 and the towns of Bombay and Tangier. Thus began the alliance between Portugal and Great Britain which has never yet been broken. Portugal

received strong reinforcements of British troops and generals, and slowly, year by year, they drove the Spaniards backwards and over their own frontiers.

Alfonso VI, when he was nineteen years old, declared himself sole ruler, and independent of his regents. This was a sad moment for his country for he was not only weak, but also such a heavy drinker, that he shocked his subjects, who, themselves an abstemious race, accused him of "drinking like an Englishman".

Perhaps, under an older, steadier king, the Portuguese might have given a thought to the hard-pressed garrisons of their Eastern empire. But Alfonso was entirely concerned with his own surroundings, to push the Spaniards out of Portugal was glory enough for him, and he was quite ready to abandon to their fate his soldiers and settlers on the shores of Eastern Africa.

And so it happened that while Portugal, helped by England, freed herself from the shackles of Spain, and finally forced that arrogant country to admit her independence, her soldiers in far-away Mombasa were fighting a losing battle against enemies as brave as themselves and far more numerous.

For five years Imam Sultan harried the garrison, and though he failed to capture the fort, he so reduced Portuguese power on the island that he was able to instal an Arab named Muhammed-bin-Mbaruk as governor of Mombasa.

The Imam then decided to continue his drive south along the coast. He pictured himself as ruler of a vast Arab empire, stretching from the mountains of Oman southward to Mozambique and beyond.

Men flocked to his victorious standard, and his navy and army grew till he controlled a large force. But the hard core of fighting Northern Arabs had not greatly increased in size, for Oman was sparsely inhabited, and all who could had already joined Sultan, hoping for loot and land. These new followers of his were islanders and people of the coast; excitable, enthusiastic and noisy, but not very steady, nor very brave; and not to be compared as fighters with the desert-bred Omani.

Sultan sailed for Mozambique. On the way he had no trouble in subduing the various villages and small towns he passed; for the Portuguese, hopelessly outnumbered, had fled; and their

people and forces were all concentrated in Mozambique. Here, at this great fortress, the Arabs met their first real set-back. The acting-governor, Gaspar de Sousa de Lacerda, beat off the ill-trained rabble without great difficulty. Mozambique, the pivot of the Eastern empire, was saved. After months of struggle, the Arabs withdrew, having met their masters.

In 1668, Imam Sultan died, worn out with years of warfare, and deeply disappointed at his failure to take Mozambique. But all the coast and islands north of this last Portuguese stronghold were now in Arab hands. The Governor of Mozambique could not attempt to recapture the lost towns, even though he had saved his own. He wisely decided to wait, to build up his resources, and to attack the Omani only when he had received strong reinforcements both from Portugal and Goa.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

1668-1698

I

AFTER the death of Sultan-bin-Seif, Omar suffered a decade of unrest. Sultan's two sons, Belarub and Seif, fought each other for power, and their fratricidal struggle shook to its very foundations their father's hard-won kingdom. Belarub, the elder, became Imam, and managed to maintain his position for a time. But young Seif had a strong following. Oman was soon torn by civil war, murderers, intrigues and treacheries. The Omani Arabs were not a peace-loving race; to them life without fighting was as food without salt. As Seif grew older the civil war raged more fiercely. Belarub could have been a good ruler, but the fates were against him. Seif's more fierce and violent character attracted the ambitious nobles, who brought their fighting men with them.

After ten years of bitter warfare, Seif had Belarub at bay in the fortress of Yabrin. With few followers left, and little food and water, the elder brother realized this was the end. Surrendering to Seif would mean either instant death, or torture and imprisonment for the rest of his life, probably in a blinded and mutilated condition.

He made his ceremonial ablutions and said his prayers. Then he asked for death. Allah, the Merciful and Compassionate, heard him, and took him from his troubles.

With his country now at peace, the victorious Seif turned his eyes to the south and determined to continue the war against the Christians. But ten years after the siege of Mozambique, another Portuguese of fighting calibre set forth from Goa to recapture the land which was lost, and avenge the men who were dead.

Pedro de Almeida, Viceroy of the East, scion of the noble family who had served their country so well in the past, sailed from India in 1678 with a strong and well-armed force. He touched at Faza for reinforcements. The people of Faza, whose

loyalty to the Portuguese had been for many years as strong as their traditional hatred to Paté, flocked gladly to the Viceroy's banner. One thousand armed men, and a large number of ships, soon augmented de Almeida's forces. He attacked Paté, and finally subdued the turbulent little town. The neighbouring towns and islands soon fell into Portuguese hands.

The natives had long since learnt to follow the line of least resistance. Whenever a strong Arab fleet appeared they cried loudly for help and deliverance from their Portuguese oppressors. After a few years of Arab rule they welcomed a firm and just Portuguese governor with the same enthusiasm. Thus, with the minimum of inconvenience to themselves, they usually managed to be on the winning side, bowing politely before the newcomer, playing the role of humble and helpless people, and leaving their rulers to pay the penalty.

De Almeida was determined that this time the guilty should be punished. A harsh lesson would be remembered. So it might have been, had the Portuguese been militarily strong enough to garrison the coast and islands as before. But they had been left to themselves for so long by the Mother Country, their numbers and physical health were so impaired by life-times spent in the tropics, that the most they could do was to chastise the offenders, and then leave them to their own devices, hoping the memory of their vengeance would have a lasting effect.

The Sultans of Paté, Siu, Lamu, and Manda were beheaded. Two hundred leading citizens, all guilty of rebellion against the Portuguese, were also sent to the block. The Arabs and natives looked on aghast at this blood-bath. They were cowed into silence and submission. When the angry Portuguese imposed heavy fines they hurried to obey. De Almeida's ships, riding at anchor off Paté, were loaded to the water line with confiscated goods. The Viceroy felt that the islanders had been taught a salutary lesson, and he was pleased with his punitive expedition and the loot he had collected. But just as he was about to set sail for the south, a fleet of war-dhows appeared bearing vengeful and avaricious Arabs, intent on keeping the island's riches from the Portuguese, and driving the white men off. The Portuguese fought well, but they were heavily outnumbered. Very soon the Christians were forced to embark and sail away. They managed to take the treasure with them, and fled to Mozambique. Thence



A Dhow
from Muscat.



Photograph by Fergus W.

A Two-masted Dhow.





Photograph by Fergus

The Carved Stern of an Arabian Dhow.

they set forth to reconquer their lost possessions, and soon the coast was once more in Portuguese hands.

II

The rulers of Zanzibar and Pemba were friendly to the Portuguese. The Queen of Pemba had become a Christian. She felt more at home among her co-religionists in Goa than in her own wild, warlock-ridden island. So she stayed in Goa and made a present of Pemba to the Portuguese. Grateful as the white men were, for this princely gift, it suited them better to have friendly rulers living in their countries and, presumably influencing their own natives, than indulging in a life of easy exile. They persuaded the Queen to return to Pemba and to keep her country quiet.

In 1682 she was back in the island, but her subjects promptly turned her out. It was not the first time that they had made it plain that Christian, non-Portuguese monarchs were not to their taste. The Queen was rescued and carried away in a Portuguese frigate, and history speaks of her no more.

Mombasa, restless and growling as usual, was the northern headquarters of the Portuguese forces, just as Mozambique was the southern. Portugal's flag flew over Forts Jesus and St. Joseph, her soldiers patrolled the streets; and her priests prayed in the churches, but the farmers and settlers were missing. Too often had their homes been burnt and the people murdered, for them to embark once more on the slow business of cultivating the land and planting crops which they might not live to reap. Only a few merchants opened shops and offices in the town, clustering as near the Fort as they could; and there were not lacking the usual devoted and heroic wives, determined to live and die beside their husbands.

In 1687 yet another expedition sailed to Paté, and the battle-scarred little town was captured, looted and fired. The Sultan and twelve councillors were sent to Goa where they were imprisoned in the Powder magazine at Sao Pedro, by night, but allowed the freedom of the town by day, and were in every way well treated. Taking advantage of this leniency, they plotted to escape, but news of their plan reached the Governor. He wisely decided

to curtail their liberty, and sent an officer and two men into their room one night to put them in irons. The Paté men attacked the Portuguese and killed them with small knives which they had hidden on their persons. The din of fighting brought others rushing to the scene, and when the tumult had died down, half a dozen white soldiers, and the Sultan and his twelve councillors all lay dead.

Meanwhile, the Portuguese in Paté had barely begun to consolidate their position when an Arab fleet appeared. The commander of the white forces, Joao Antunes Portugal, instantly fled to his ships, and sailed away without firing a shot.

Only in Mombasa did the Portuguese still hold on. They knew they would be attacked, but they prepared for war and were determined to fight it out. Fort Jesus was abundantly stocked with provisions, and it had the supreme advantage of having fresh water within its walls.

While the Portuguese and their native allies were making themselves ready for battle, the Imam Seif-bin-Sultan was marshalling his fleet and army. He was a courageous and enterprising man. He planned to make Muscat the capital of a mighty empire, and he was encouraged by those of his nobles who had sailed among the verdant southern islands, and who wished to live in a climate that was softer, in a country that was greener, than their own harsh, desert land.

In 1696 the Omani fleet sailed on the north-east monsoon. Seif-bin-Sultan had with him the strongest force which had ever faced the Portuguese in Africa. There were seven warships and ten dhows, carrying some three thousand men.

They appeared before Mombasa on 15 March. When the people of Mombasa saw this formidable array they left their homes and their shops, and crowded into the fort. Two thousand five hundred men, women and children took refuge within its walls. Of these only fifty-odd were Portuguese, the rest being Christian, Moslem and pagan natives; and a few Arabs, who were loyal to their white friends, and preferred their rule to that of the savage people of Oman.

The great siege of Fort Jesus began.

The Portuguese were prepared to resist for a very long time, and the Arabs had no intention of trying to storm the fortress. They dug trenches all round it except on the seaward

side, where there was a narrow strip of coral rock, which their guns commanded. They cleared all the brushwood away from near the walls, so that if the besieged risked a sortie to collect fuel, they were unlikely to return alive.

The Arabs were quite content to use time as their chief weapon during the months that followed. Their only real danger was from relieving fleets from Goa to Mozambique. But they believed that Portuguese power was on the wane, that the monarchs of the Mother Country had lost all interest in their Eastern Empire (as indeed they had, being now fully occupied with the fertile, rich land of Brazil) and that any ships sent by the Viceroy to help their people trapped in the fort could be adequately dealt with by their own well-armed dhows.

The siege dragged on. The beleagured Portuguese found they still had some friends left. Fatuma, Queen of Zanzibar, was the niece of that Queen Mwana Mwema, who had been driven out by the Portuguese. Fatuma reigned over the northern part of the island, and her brother Bakiri, was ruler of the southern half.

Fatuma feared the Omani Arabs. She saw them growing stronger and more predatory; she watched them taking over the islands and towns in the north, driving out the comparatively peaceful and friendly Portuguese, coming nearer and nearer to her domain—rapacious, cruel and treacherous. She thought they would eventually attack Zanzibar and that they would either depose her, or if they left her alone, that her island's trade would collapse. Goods from Europe and India would then become unobtainable and there would be no market for the spices, grain and timber grown by her people.

She wanted the Portuguese to win this war; if she could assist them through the siege, they would be able to hold out until help came from Goa, Mozambique, or even from Portugal.

She made ready her ships of war and called in the Wa-nyika people to help her. She loaded dhows with food and sent them off to Mombasa, with an armed escort. But they could not penetrate the barrier of Arab ships, by now reinforced from Muscat. The Zanzibar natives were no match for the Northern Arabs. When the Portuguese first saw them approaching they feared they were more enemy boats, but as they drew nearer they realized from their shape, that they came from Zanzibar. Their

hopes rose, but soon fell again as they sadly watched the Arabian dhows attack the relieving fleet; and before long they saw some of the Zanzibar ships sinking in flames, while others put about as fast as their clumsy sails would let them, and fled.

When Fatuma saw the remnants of her navy return, beaten and shattered, she was in despair. Not only had she failed to help her friends, but the Arabs now knew on whose side her sympathies lay; and they would not forget.

Inside Fort Jesus the defenders' sufferings increased. There were a few desertions. Men slipped down the walls on ropes by night and disappeared into the bush. This was not altogether a misfortune, for it helped to relieve the food situation, even if it reduced the fighting force. But there was also much sickness, and many people died. In November the Arab general offered to spare the lives of the garrison, if they would surrender. With memories of Yussuf's treachery before them it is not surprising that this offer was rejected. Their numbers had now been reduced to twenty Portuguese and fifteen hundred others.

III

In December a small fleet from Goa was sighted. There were only four ships, carrying about seven hundred men, but to the besieged they must have seemed like angels from Heaven. The newcomers fought their way through the Arab dhows, into the harbour, and up to the quays, and there the steel-helmeted soldiers, rushed ashore, guarding the men who carried supplies of precious food and ammunition on their backs. Yelling like devils, calling on their saints, the valiant group drove through the besiegers, battling their way up the main street of the town, while the defenders of the fort thronged the walls and waited by the gates, ready to let them in.

Only one hundred of the men who had landed reached the fort, but they had with them the food and gunpowder, and as the huge gates swung wide and they ran in, those on the walls poured volley after volley into the seething mass of Arabs and blacks who were trying to prevent their entry. The gates clanged to, the besieged and relieving soldiers embraced each other, wild

with joy and thankfulness, and then set about distributing some of the stores and locking the rest away for future use.

The commander of the fleet, his task completed, prepared to sail. Still firing his guns at the dhows which clustered round him, and his small arms at the men in the little canoes who shot arrows at him, he fought his way out of the harbour on Christmas Day 1696, and stood south for Zanzibar. There he was warmly welcomed by Queen Fatuma and her husband, Abdulla of Otonto, a town on the mainland.

On 14 January, 1697, bubonic plague broke out in Fort Jesus. It raged through the masses of people crammed together insides the walls. There was no cure; every day three or four victims died, and their bodies were dropped over the wall to rot away in the bush. The strange thing was that the besieging Arabs did not catch the infection.

Those inside the fort suffered terribly. They had plenty of food but it was now all stale. They had few medicines left, and no means whatever of coping with the plague. They watched the bright sea till their eyes ached, hoping against hope for the sight of Portuguese ships, but all they ever saw were more and more dhows from Muscat, bringing hundreds more enemies.

Among the besieged there were several Portuguese women. The name of one of them, Aldonça Gomes, lives on because of her courage and devotion in nursing the sick and wounded, with no thought of self-preservation. A few weeks after the outbreak of the plague, she caught it and died.

At the end of January there were only twenty white men-at-arms left alive. By June the commandant, Antonio Moco de Mello, an Augustine priest, and two children, were the only Portuguese still living. Besides these, all that survived of the original two thousand five hundred were a handful of men from Faza, led by their seventeen-year-old prince, Daud-bin-Sheikh; a few Swahili men and fifty native women.

About this time a strange figure, almost from another world, appeared on the scene. The privateer, Captain Kidd, who had been sent to the Indian Ocean from the Caribbean, was sailing his ship *Adventure Galley* around the islands and up and down the coast, hunting for pirates.

But while he searched the coast of Madagascar, the Persian, Indian and Arab pirate boats were being careened and repaired

in the Seychelles Islands, where they were in the habit of fore-gathering at Pirates Bay, on the Island of Mahé. As Captain Kidd sailed to Zanzibar and thence northwards, the pirates came south, behind his back, so that he failed to meet them. He reached Mombasa at the height of the siege. Looking through his spy-glass towards the island he saw the harbour black with dhows; ashore he could make out a massed throng of armed Arabs and natives, with red flags waving in their midst.

Over the fort floated the Portuguese banner. Kidd would gladly have helped the beleaguered Christians, but what could one ship do against so many? He regretfully put about and sailed away. Soon after this, realizing that his career as a privateer was a failure, he suggested to his crew that they should themselves turn pirates. They delightedly agreed, and Captain Kidd now embarked on the most financially successful years of his life.

Inside Fort Jesus there was only misery and death—yet still the little garrison held out. In August, Antonio de Mello lay sick of the plague. Exhausted with the anxiety and suffering he had seen and endured, he had no wish to live any longer. He handed the keys of the fort to Daud-bin-Sheikh, gave him his blessing and died.

Young Daud was true to his trust, though he might easily have made peace with the Arabs, or even have escaped over the walls at night and joined the other deserters living in the bush. He took over the defence with what was left of the garrison, heartening them, and still refusing to surrender.

In September the Governor of Mozambique, tardily mindful of his beleaguered countrymen, sent a small fleet to their aid.

With great surprise and greater joy Daud saw the square sails approaching from the south. Once more on the walls stood men whose happiness lighted their haggard faces and strengthened their skeleton bodies. This time, as the Portuguese reinforcements battled their way along the street, they looked up to see the laughing, cheering garrison welcoming them, and they realized with a shock that not one of the faces grinning down was white. The gates swung open, and they poured in.

There were one hundred and fifty Portuguese and two or three hundred Indians and natives under a Portuguese general, all well-armed, well-fed, and bringing arms and food with them. They were rapturously received, and their General embraced

and kissed the weary young Daud, honouring him for his courage and loyalty, and filled with admiration for the fortitude he had shown.

IV

These new arrivals put fresh heart into the exhausted garrison, and with faith in the future and food in their stomachs, they felt that they could easily hold out a while longer, and then, surely, the Portuguese would assemble and send a really powerful fleet to their rescue. But the weeks and months dragged on, and no more help ever came. They suffered another severe blow when their General died. His place was taken by a non-commissioned officer, Sotto-Maior Leonardo Barbosa. The Prince of Faza still lived. Probably his mixed blood made him resistant to the fevers and sicknesses caused by the miserable conditions in which they lived, and the lack of fresh vegetables and meat. But the white men, one by one, succumbed.

The siege continued and the helpless men seemed utterly forgotten.

The King and Government in Lisbon must have known of their danger, they must have realized that if Mombasa fell, their fleets sailing to Goa would have no protection of any sort once they left Mozambique. The merchantmen would be at the mercy of all the pirate dhows, and all the warships of the Sultans of the Coast. But Lisbon never raised a hand to help. Portugal's power in the Orient was fading away, her Eastern Empire was slipping through her lazy fingers.

One really strong man, such as da Gama, d'Albuquerque, or Siexas de Cabreira, properly backed with ships and men, could easily have routed the Arabs and saved the gallant, exhausted men in the fort. But there seemed to be no such figure now.

Queen Fatuma of Zanzibar watched with many misgivings the long-drawn-out agony of Fort Jesus. She was not in a position to give them any more help, much as she wanted to. She wrote once to the Viceroy of the East, possibly urging him to relieve the garrison and perhaps asking for protection, for she feared the outcome of the siege. She would have been wise

to cross to the mainland, and to seek safety among her husband's people, but she preferred to stay on her island.

In the autumn of 1698 the Viceroy of the East at last began the outfitting of a strong force at Goa. The sailors and soldiers were eager to go to the help of their comrades, but there were many delays during the preparations. It was not until late in the year that they at last set sail. They were by this time very well equipped, and quite strong enough to drive away Seif's army and navy and rescue the remnants of their people, if only they could arrive in time. During the tedious crossing of the Indian Ocean, the fighting men impatiently paced the decks, hoping and praying they might not be too late. As they drew near the coast, they remembered that this time they would have to rely entirely on themselves. There was no question now, as in the old days, of picking up reinforcements at friendly Faza or Malindi, for all the coast was in the hands of Seif.

The beleaguered garrison had no idea that help was on its way. Despair and fear filled their hearts as their numbers dwindled day by day.

One year and three months after the men from Mozambique had entered the fort, there were only sixteen people left alive within its walls. They were Leonardo Barbosa and eight other Portuguese; Daud-bin-Sheikh, three Indians, two native women, and one African boy. The Arabs could easily have stormed the place, but their energy and excitement had subsided months before, probably sapped by the soft, heavy Mombasa air. They were quite content to sit encamped, and wait for the inevitable end.

The sixteen within the fort were almost finished. They were sick; they had very little food and ammunition, no medicines and no hope.

The rescuing fleet drew nearer every day; only three days more and they would be sailing past Fort Jesus's walls and engaging the dhows. But those within the fort never dreamt that relief was so near.

On the night of 12 December, 1698, Barbosa lowered the African boy over the walls to gather some healing leaves for their wounds and sores. The boy was seen and captured by an unusually vigilant Arab. He was taken, grey with fright, before an Arab officer, and at once revealed the state of affairs inside the

fort. The Arabs realized that they could now bring the long siege to an end with little effort; thirteen men and two women, all sick and worn out, could not offer much resistance.

Next evening, as soon as it was dark, ladders were set against the walls. With guns slung across their backs and curved daggers loose in their sheaths, the Arabs climbed up the ladders and leapt over the parapet. But the Portuguese could still fight. Led by Barbosa, they resisted heroically, retreating from one building to another all through that awful night. They inflicted many casualties on the Arabs and it was not till dawn, next day, that the end came. Then Leonardo Barbosa, his ammunition done, clubbed his blunderbuss and rushed out against the invaders, who instantly shot him down. The survivors threw down their arms and surrendered.

The two native women were still alive, also Daud-bin-Sheikh, eight Portuguese and three Indians. The Portuguese were put in chains, and ordered to reveal the whereabouts of the treasure which the Arabs believed was hidden somewhere inside the fort.

One of the men took his captors to the powder magazine, and the other to the chapel where a store of powder was kept. As the Arabs rushed in, their prisoners managed to set the dumps alight. Two mighty explosions rocked the walls; the bodies of the two prisoners and of two hundred Arabs were hurled in all directions. In the confusion that followed Daud-bin-Sheikh escaped. The women and the remaining men were later taken to Oman.

Five days later the fleet from Goa arrived. They saw the red flag of Oman floating over the fort, and though the fighting men were wild to attack the Arabs, their leaders thought otherwise, and pusillanimously stood the ships away. Nothing could have shown more clearly the decline of Portuguese power, and the loss of their old aggressive spirit, than this failure to send a strong force in time to save their fort; and, when that force did arrive, its miserable flight from the victorious Arabs.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

1699-1729

I

SEIF-BIN-SULTAN set about repairing Fort Jesus, and strengthening his army. The whole coast down to Mombasa subsided quietly under Arab rule and reverted rapidly, so far as trade and the standard of living went, to the conditions of three hundred years before.

Now that the siege was over, the people of Mombasa, of course, welcomed the Arabs with open arms. Here was a new, exciting situation; a change of government, of laws, of soldiery, of tax-gatherers. At night there were sword-dances and stick-dances round the fires in the street.

Typically, the Arabs used sharp-edged weapons for their dances, so that there were frequent casualties, while the Swahilis circled cautiously around their *vis-à-vis* with short sticks, which swished furiously through the air and invariably hit the other man's stick and not his body. The expressions of the Arabs, also, during their dances, remained enigmatic and emotionless; only their alert eyes, gleaming in the firelight, watched every move and feint of their partners. But the natives, their teeth bared, their eyes rolling, were ferocious-looking creatures indeed, and the more careful they were not to be hurt, the more savage did their aspect become.

The Arabs brought with them from Muscat salt, dates, carpets and jewels, which they traded for food, cloth, slaves, ivory and the ladies of the town. Medical services practically ceased to exist. The sick of the poorest classes now had to rely on their own witch-doctors, while the rich patronized the solemn, portentous Arab physicians. Mild cases recovered; the serious ones died.

Fishing continued, as it always had done and always would. The men took their outrigger canoes to the deep pools lying just inside the reef. With fire-hardened wooden spears in their hands, they dived into the green depths of the sandy pools,

emerging with perhaps a small shark or some other fish impaled.

In the little gardens near the town the natives grew a few pawpaws, chillies, sweet potatoes, and millet; and kept goats and sheep and hens. They grew only enough for their daily wants, nothing was put by. If there came a drought and the crops failed, the people simply starved.

Soon after the fall of Fort Jesus, Seif sent a fleet to attack Zanzibar. Queen Fatuma had armed her people, and awaited the invaders bravely. But the softly-bred islanders could not withstand the Northern Arabs, who swept ashore, captured Fatuma, and carried her off. She was sent to Oman, where she spent the next twelve years in exile. Seif's Arabs were soon in full control of the island, though Fatuma's son, Hasan, had taken the title of Mwenyi Mkuu. He was allowed to remain in Zanzibar, acknowledging Seif as his overlord, but the island tribes continued to regard Hasan as their true ruler. Probably it was he who asked to have his mother back, for she returned in 1710.

Zanzibar now came greatly under the influence of Arabian culture. More than ever before, Arab customs and manners were superimposed on those which the islanders had evolved for themselves. Witch-doctoring and devil-raising were still the staple spiritual diet of the more simple-minded country people, but the rich and aristocratic Arabs and Swahili were devout Moslems and assiduously practised Arab ways. All little boys and most little girls had to know how to read the Koran by the time they were ten years old.

As they grew older *marriages de convenances* were arranged for them by their families; very occasionally, the young man may have had a glimpse of his intended bride before the negotiations started, but usually he had to rely on the reports of his female relations, who had called on the girl's parents and carefully inspected the girl herself. Her appearance and accomplishments, her deportment and education would all be recounted at length to the suitor and his parents. There was no hurry. Both sides must pause and ponder, while the girl's parents chose from among the many candidates, the one who was apparently the best match for their daughter.

There were strict social barriers to be upheld. Young people

of certain tribes could not marry outside their tribe, and the classes were rigorously segregated.

When the respective parents had agreed on the suitability of the young man and the maiden for each other, the amount of the dowry was fixed. With this satisfactorily settled, soothsayers were called in to determine an auspicious day for the wedding. At the ceremony the couple were blessed by the priest, who called on God "that they might live together in good and great blessing, that everything might be well between them, and that they might enjoy every good thing which God had prepared for them."

But even now they could not be together. The soothsayers must set to work all over again to find a suitable day and hour for the bridegroom to enter his wife's house. Then the bridegroom, oiled and scented, dressed in his finest clothes and escorted by his friends, arrived at his bride's home. Her house was filled with flowers, while singing women scattered scent upon the guests from chased silver vessels. Within the bride's room the young man and the girl sat side by side, and women washed their feet. Then the bridegroom rose, and standing before his wife, took her head in his hands, while a holy verse was read. The bridegroom then spoke these words: "I acknowledge this woman as my wife. God keep me and her together in happiness."

Having said good-bye to his friends, he turned to the waiting girl. Alone with her for the first time, he gave her some money and begged her to speak to him. She replied: "Greeting, master." While in an outer room their friends feasted and made merry, the young man undressed his bride. For seven days they stayed together, food being brought to them by her relations. After the honeymoon the wife was taken to her husband's house, there to spend the rest of her life.

As time passed three co-wives might be added to the establishment, and concubines from among the family slaves would swell the harem numbers. All the children were regarded as legitimate, and though the wives might scheme against each other—even quarrel sometimes, and give way to jealousy—it was usually on behalf of their children rather than for their own sakes. Moslem girls knew what to expect from matrimony.

As married women their lives held many compensations. Never should the husband give one wife a present, without

giving all the others gifts of equal value. As the women grew older they gained in authority and importance, and the younger generation had to treat them with great respect.

And they were never lonely.

Their children's births were attended by many ceremonies. Into the baby's ears were whispered the call to prayer and the introduction to prayer, that the infant might grow up always in the consciousness of his duty to God. Nor were his manners and his duty to mankind neglected, for the laws of courtesy and honour were closely entwined and very dear to the hearts of the Arabs—both those wild and savage ones from the north, and their softer and more easy-going, island-bred brothers.

There were rules for hospitality and rules for travelling, rules for guests and rules for hosts. The well-bred and honourable Arab should visit his neighbours frequently, help them when possible and keep trouble from them. But he should never outstay his welcome.

When travelling he should be good-tempered and calm, giving all his food and provisions to his companions, to save them the trouble of unpacking their own. Visitors must be cherished and cared for, their wishes anticipated, and boredom kept at bay with conversation. Their animals, too, must be fed and watered, and properly housed. Never must the Arab scold his slaves in front of his guests, for this might cause his friends embarrassment, and lower the honour of his house.

The devout Arab's life was passed in the consciousness of God's presence, at all times, in all places. Every act, even the simplest, should be prefaced by a prayer, and performed to the glory of God. Naturally, one of the acts most pleasing to the Merciful and Compassionate, was the destruction or removal of all infidels.

For nearly three hundred years the people of Zanzibar had tolerated and often liked, even loved, the Christians living among them. In many ways they resembled each other, for the fine manners and flowery speech of the Portuguese were not far removed from that of the islanders themselves. But the fiery wind from Oman swept away all this happy and easy-going relationship.

II

The Portuguese living on the island, who once had numbered nine thousand families, were now all dead or gone. Their churches were used as jails. The natives called them *gereza*, a corruption of the Portuguese word *ecclesia*.

The Arabs pulled down the church in Zanzibar village and with the material they built a little fort facing the sea. Of the three cannon mounted there, one was trained on the house, just behind the fort, where Queen Fatuma lived. Sometime before 1728 she died, but her descendants continued for another hundred years as Mwenyi Mkuu of the island.

The Portuguese made half-hearted attempts to recapture their lost strongholds. Even the lethargic government in Lisbon was stirred when they heard of the fall of Fort Jesus, and the deaths of its defenders. Money, ships and men were made available, and fleets set out from Lisbon, Mozambique and Goa. With proper leadership and organization they could have beaten the Arabs. But the spirit was lacking. Three times, in 1699, 1703 and 1710, Portuguese ships of war approached the shores of East Africa and offered battle to Seif's army and navy. Each time the Arabs drove them away.

Portuguese morale sank to its lowest ebb, and the Arabs began to feel themselves invincible. The victorious Seif carried his conquests farther south. After capturing Zanzibar, Pemba and Kilwa, he ventured to attack Mozambique itself. But this citadel was too strong for him. Here and at Goa were massed all the defences the Portuguese could muster to keep open their sea routes to the east.

Their heavy cannon, their numerous warships, were more than a match for the lightly-built and clumsily-rigged dhows, with their crews of undisciplined Arabs and natives. Seif tried to mine under the walls of Mozambique fortress, but the Portuguese engineers counter-mined, and Seif, realizing that he had reached the limit of his southern penetration, withdrew. He spent the remaining years of his life in strengthening his domains. He garrisoned Fort Jesus and put in an Arab governor. He enlarged the fortress in Zanzibar and improved the defences on Pemba. He repaired the ruined irrigation works of Oman, and

planted many thousands of date-palms and coconuts throughout his territories.

He died in 1711, after a stormy and successful life, having cleared the whole coast of the Portuguese as far south as Mozambique, and shaken their Eastern Empire to its foundations.

Seif's son, Sultan, never left Oman. As usually happened on the death of an Imam, the country was instantly in a turmoil, with claimants and intriguers all trying to oust each other. Sultan fought ceaselessly for seven years, and then died. There followed a typical period of Omani intrigues, treacheries and complicated political coups.

Sultan left many children, of whom two at once became the leaders of opposing factions. The "Intelligent and Pious" party wanted Muhenna, the eldest, for Imam; the "Illiterate", or popular party, backed young Seif-bin-Sultan, then just a child. He was elected Amam, an inferior position to that of Imam. Muhenna was at once brought secretly by his party to the castle at Muscat, and on him was conferred the Imamate of Oman.

Muhenna was clever, and under his rule Oman might have prospered, but for the revolt of his cousin Yaa'rub, who seized Muscat, and drove out the Imam. Muhenna's followers and soldiers melted away, and he himself, promised protection by Yaa'rub, surrendered. He was instantly imprisoned and murdered, after less than two years of reign.

Yaa'rub appointed himself regent for the boy Seif, now acknowledged Iman of Oman. But very soon Yaa'rub's ambition outran his wisdom, and he proclaimed himself Imam. Seif's uncle, Belarub, called up the tribes to fight for the boy, and the murders and massacres started all over again. Yaa'rub retired to the interior for a short time, but soon emerged with an ally, one Muhammed-bin-Nasir, and between them they managed to capture the young Imam, who was forced to walk in their suite, like any ordinary citizen. Soon Yaa'rub died, whereupon Muhammed proclaimed himself Iman. Still the wars went on, until Muhammed was killed by a stray musket ball, and Seif became Imam for the second time.

The Portuguese in Goa and Mozambique knew that the Arabs of Oman, in their present state of disorder, could not for the moment be a menace to them. Mombasa was in the hands

of the powerful Mazrui tribe, the head of whom, Masir-bin-Abdulla, was Governor of the fort and the island. They paid only lip service to Oman, and were but awaiting the time when they could break away, and proclaim their independence.

The leading Arab families along the coast were quarrelling amongst themselves while the natives, as usual, suffered. Most of them longed to see the Portuguese return.

Mombasa and Zanzibar renewed their ancient feud. The Arabs of Mombasa prepared to attack those of Zanzibar. The Governor of Zanzibar fled to Paté, and the Sultan of that island, terrified of an attack by the dreaded men of Mombasa, sent to Goa for help. When trouble threatened, it was to the white men that the natives turned for aid, blandly ignoring the fact that soon after the Portuguese had rescued them, they usually called on the Arabs to turn them out.

III

In 1728 General Luiz de Mello Sempayo, the Viceroy of the East, set out from Goa with six ships full of armed men. They touched at Paté, Siu and Faza. Just as in the old days, they were welcomed delightedly by the volatile natives, and went on their way with reinforcements, fresh supplies, and good wishes. They were joined by their old friend, the Prince of Faza, who was thankful to be on the offensive with the Portuguese again, and was longing for another fight with the Arabs.

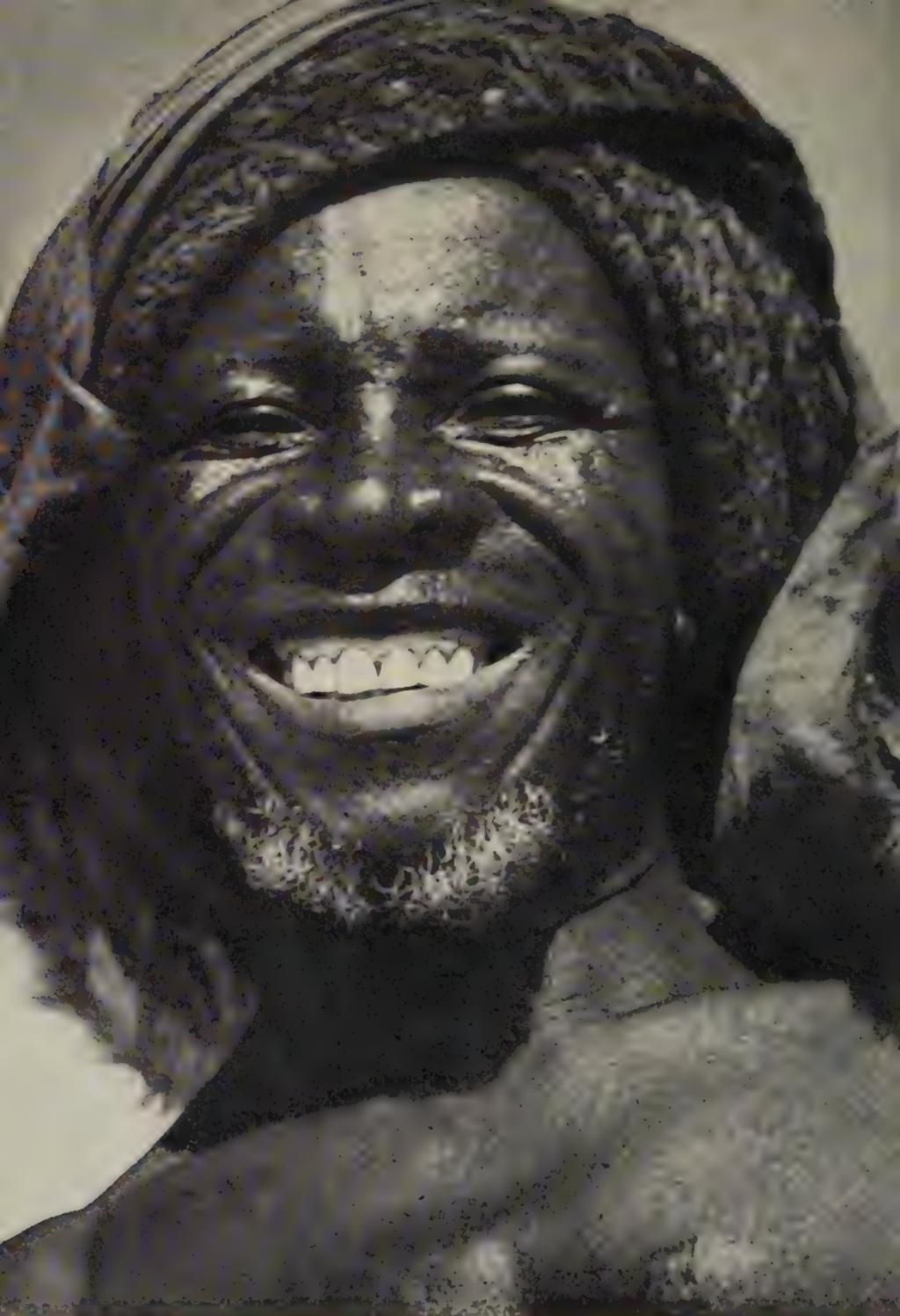
They found Mombasa disorganized and poorly defended. They had little trouble in taking the fort. The red flag of Islam was hauled down; Portugal's standard floated once more over the scarred grey walls. Alvaro Caetano was installed as governor. The leading Sheikhs and townsmen came to pay homage to the Portuguese; fishermen and peasants brought them little gifts of fruits of the sea and the land. On the surface all was happiness.

A treaty was signed with the Sheikh of Paté, and by the end of 1728, all the coast and islands from Paté to Mozambique and beyond, were in the hands of the Christians.

But the Mazrui hated them. They regarded Mombasa as their own personal property, and were not prepared to submit to the

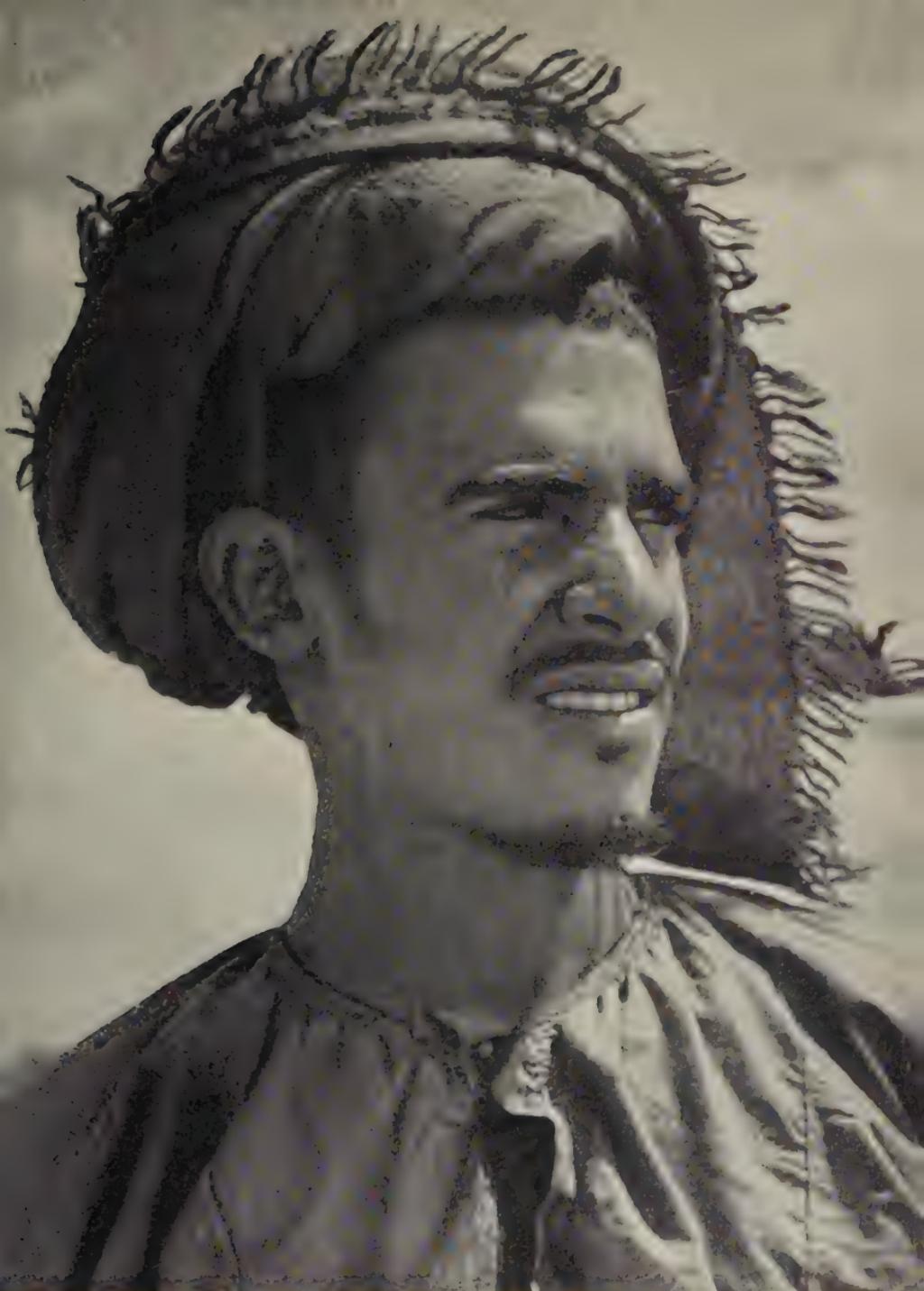


Bull Fighting
in Pemba.



Photograph by Fergus Wilson

An Arab Sailor of Slave descent.



Photograph by *Fergus Wilson*

A Muscat Arab Sailor.

Portuguese any more than they would to the Omani Arabs. They bided their time, and soon saw how weak the Portuguese had become, and how little support they had, either from Lisbon, Goa or Mozambique. They were further encouraged, because they believed that if they could drive the white men out, there would be no more interference from Oman.

Seif's position there had worsened. Still another enemy had risen against him; this time it was his cousin Belarub. Seif's best fighters were his force of Baluchi mercenaries specially brought from India, but one day they fell into an ambush and every one was killed. In despair Seif turned for help to his country's hereditary enemies, the Persians. The Shah gladly promised all aid. He at once invaded Oman, ravaged the towns, killed the men and many of the older women, carried the young ones and the children away, and very soon made himself master of the country. The unhappy Seif was imprisoned in the dungeon at Rustak and left there until he died. He was the last of the Yaa'rubi dynasty.

IV

In 1729 the Mazrui and other Arabs in Mombasa determined to make a great effort to regain the island. They laid their plans carefully, remembering that in the past it had often happened that the Portuguese, warned of trouble, did not run away, but entrenched themselves and fought to the end. But when things seemed quiet, they grew careless and were easily thrown off their guard. They must be taken unawares.

The Arabs remembered Yussuf, and his fête-day massacre. They planned to attack the Portuguese suddenly, during one of their festivals. The moment came when the white men were celebrating a saint's day and many of the soldiers from the fort were strolling about the town thoughtlessly enjoying themselves.

Suddenly hundreds of Arabs burst from the narrow side streets, sweeping over the surprised Christians and cutting them down before they had a chance to resist. Very soon it was all over. Then the Arabs rushed towards Fort Jesus, while once

more the heavy gates clanged to, the guns were manned and a small group of Portuguese soldiers looked down for the last time at the Arabs and natives clamouring against the white mens' great stronghold, which had withstood so many attacks and seen so many tragedies.

There was no help for the besieged Portuguese.

The Portuguese Governor of Paté, though ordered by the Viceroy of Goa to send reinforcements to Mombasa, was unable to do so, having only one small ship and ninety men left fit for duty, out of his total force of a hundred and forty. He himself was being besieged in a half-hearted way by the Sheikh and people of Paté, and he came to the conclusion that his only course was to evacuate himself and his men, and return to Goa.

He was able to buy a galliot from the Sheikh of Paté, who probably thought this was the simplest way of getting rid of his enemies. One never knew if the white men might not return in force and avenge their dead with fire and sword. It was best not to have their blood on one's hands.

Alvaro Caetano, trapped inside the fort, and abandoned by his colleague in Paté, offered only a token resistance to the Arab and island forces. When a fresh fleet from Oman arrived to reinforce the besiegers, he capitulated. On 26 November, 1729, the Portuguese flag was hauled down for the last time from the ramparts of Fort Jesus.

This was the end of Portuguese domination over the islands and coast in the north. Perhaps during the years that followed the natives remembered with regret the benefits they had received under the rule of the white men. Their trade fell away. Paté, once a fertile and well-farmed island, reverted to the wilderness. Wild hogs and antelopes multiplied and raided the villagers' crops at night. The houses fell down, the fine stone road collapsed, the customs house disappeared into the bush. All up and down the coast there was poverty and decay.

One last effort was made to retake Mombasa by General Sempayo, who sailed from Goa with six ships carrying fourteen hundred men, to recapture the island. But the fleet was struck by one of those sudden, violent storms which sometimes sweep across the Indian Ocean. The Viceroy went down with his ship, three other ships were lost with all on board, and only two battered craft managed to creep back to Goa, with the remnant

of their crews. Portuguese power had gone for ever from the whole coast north of Mozambique.

All they had worked for and created, their churches, and hospitals, their shops and villas disappeared and were lost, along with the memory of the good and evil they had done. Bush grew up to the walls of their towns. Their country gardens were smothered in wild creepers and plants. Only their forts remained, with the strong, scarred walls still standing, but the inner buildings fallen into decay.

During the next hundred years small progress was made in the arts of peace. Steeped in the scented air and the hot sunshine of the coast, Arabs and natives dreamed their lives away; chatting for hours about nothing in particular, drinking coffee and playing cards; while their slaves moved languidly among the coconut plantations, and cultivated small patches of the fertile ground.

Upon the islands and the villages of the Azanian coast their ancient lethargy descended; and all sank into a long listless slumber.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Portuguese Pioneers. EDGAR PRESTAGE, M.A., D.LTT., F.R.H.S., F.R.G.S.

Gedi the Lost City. E. RODWELL, F.R.G.S.

Ivory, Apes and Peacocks. E. RODWELL, F.R.G.S.

The Red Book, Kenya, 1925

East Africa and Its Invaders. COUPLAND.

Guide to Mombasa and Its Surroundings. BEATRIX BELLINGHAM.

Revende's Description of East Africa in 1634. SIR JOHN GREY.

Coast Causerie. E. RODWELL, F.R.G.S.

The Foundation of British East Africa. J. W. GREGORY, D.S.C.

Imams and Seyyids of Oman from 1699 on. G. BADGER.

The Land of Zing. CAPT. C. H. STIGAND.

Hakluyt Society Correa.

Peeps at Great Explorers. SIR GEORGE SCOTT.

The Coasts of East Africa and Malabar in the beginning of the Sixteenth Century. DUARTE BARBOSA.

Zanzibar the Island Metropolis of East Africa. W. H. INGRAMS.

Memoirs of an Arabian Princess. SEYYIDA SALME BINT SAID.

Die Portugiesenzeit von Deutsch-und-Englisch Ostafrika. STRANDES.

Voyage of Linschoten to the East Indies. HAKLUYT SOCIETY.

As Pinturas das Armadas da India. FRAZAO DE VASCONCELLOS.

Os Navios da descoveberta. JOÃO BRAY DE OLIVIERA.

The Tragic History of the Sea. 1552 to 1585 FROM PORTUGUESE VOYAGES,
TRANSLATED BY CHARLES DAVID LEY.

Everymans Library.

INDEX

A

Abubakr, 136
 Aden, 61, 137
Adventure Galley, 157
 d'Albuquerque, Alfonso, 56, 61
 — Mathias, 102
 Alfonso V, King, 16
 — VI, King, 148-9
 d'Almeida, Francisco, 50 *et seq.*
 — Pedro, 151
 Alva, Duke of, 94
 d'Anaya, Petro, 52
 Andrade, Ruy Freire de, 128
 Angra, 40
 Antonio, Prior of Crato, 93
 Arab customs, 165
 — marriages, 163, 164
 Augustinians, 102, 104, 116, 117,
 122

B

Bakiri, 155
 Baluchi, 169
 Banians, 135
 Barawa, 56, 58
 Barbosa, Duarte, 73
 Baretto, Francisco, 71
 Bay of Blasius, 23
 Belarub, 151, 169
 Belem, 22
Berrio, 17, 26
 Berthelot, Pierre, 128
 Bombay, 142, 148
 Borges, Rogue, 134
 Braganza, Duke of, 47, 94
 Brava, 74
 Brazil, 42, 94, 155
 Bubonic plague, 157
 Bullfighting, 66

C

Cabral, Pedro Alvares, 42
 Cabreira, Francisco de Seixas de,
 134 *et seq.*
 Caetano, Alvaro, 168, 170
 Cairatto, John Baptist, 102
 Calcadhilho, Bp., 20
 Camara brothers, 93
 Catherine, Duchess of Braganza,
 93
 — Princess of Braganza, 148
 Catherine, Queen, 93
 Cavendish, 99
 Charles II, King of England, 148
 — V, Emperor, 94
 Chingulia, Don Jeronimo, 116 *et seq.*
 Cochin, 68, 75
 Comoro, 99
 Covilha, Pedro de, 19
 — Prior, 20
 Crato, Prior of, 93
 Cueta, siege of, 14
 da Cunha, Tristao, 56

D

Daud-bin-Sheikh, 157 *et seq.*, 168
 Davana, 26, 30, 35
 Dias, Bartholomew, 16
 — Diego, 20
 — Pedro, 20
 Dominicans, 72, 104
 Drake, 99

E

Edward Bonaventura, 99 *et seq.*
 Esteves, Pero, 20
 Ethiopia, 29
 Evora, 45

F

Fatuma, Queen, 155, 159, 163, 166
 Faza, 96, 128, 135, 146, 151-2, 168
 Fernandez, Alvaro, 75

G

da Gama, Alvaro Annes, 16
 —— Estevan, 16, 44, 47
 —— Gaspar, 40
 —— Paul, 40
 —— Vasco, returns 41; married 41; second voyage 44; last voyage 68; dies 69
 de Gambao, Pedro Leitao, 121
 Gambia, 15
 Gedi, 107-8, 148
 Giraldo the Fearless, 16
 Goa, 71, 96, 116, 135, 137, 146, 151, 153, 160, 166, 168, 170
 Gomez, Aldonça, 157

H

Hakluyt, Richard, 101
 Henry, Infante Dom, 14
 —— I, King, 93
 Homem, Vasco, 72
 House of Mines, 22

I

India, arrival at, 39, 68
 Inquisition, 46, 93, 120

J

Jaca, 134
 Jesuits, 72, 104
 Jews, 135
 John of Gaunt, 14
 —— I, King, 14
 —— II, King, 18
 —— III, King, 68
 —— IV, King, 148

K

Kidd, Captain, 157
 Kilimani, 25
 Kilwa, 42, 44, 51-2, 56, 166
 Kizim Kazi, 100

L

Lacerda, Gaspar de Sousa de, 150
 Lamon, 74
 Lamu, 56, 96, 99, 133, 135-6, 146, 152
 Lancaster, James, 99
 Linschoten, 62
 Luisa, Dona, Queen-Mother, 148
 Luziva, 135

M

Macedo, Marcal de, 116
 Machado, Joao, 20, 28-9, 43-4
 Madagascar, 56, 133
 Madi, Bwana, 137
 Mahé, 158
 Majid, Ibn, 39
 Manda, 99, 133, 135, 152
 Manuel I, King, 13
 Marco, Lucas, 19
 Maxeras, 105
 Mazrui, 148, 168-9

Melinde, 34, 40, 43, 45, 55-6, 68-9, 74, 97-8, 105
 Mello, Antonio Moco de, 157
 Miguel, Father, 143 *et seq.*
 Mines, House of, 22
 Mkuu, Bwana, 136-7
 Mogadishu, 56, 58, 96
 Mombasa, 29, 43, 50, 53 *et seq.*, 69, 73, 95 *et seq.*, 116 *et seq.*, 142 *et seq.*, 146 *et seq.*, 153-4, 168 *et seq.*
 Moncaide, 39
 Monsoons, course of, 48
 Moura, Francisco de, 128
 Mozambique, 26, 42, 44, 56, 61, 134, 150, 158, 166
 Mozungolo, 105, 107, 129, 135
 Mtangata, 126
 Muhammad, Sultan, 136
 Muhenna, 167
 Muscat, 60, 139 *et seq.*, 147, 162
 Mutineers, 24
 Mwema Mwema, Queen, 143

N

Nasur, Imam, 139-40
 Natal, 25, 75
 Noronha, Dom Miguel de, 128
 Nunez, Joao, 20

O

Oja, 57-8
 Ormuz, 60, 139
 Otondo, 135

P

Paté, 63-4, 73, 96, 99, 125, 133, 134-5, 142, 146, 152-3, 168, 170

Pemba, 65, 97, 99, 133-5, 146, 153, 166
 Pereira, Francisco de Sousa, 107
 —— Melo, 104, 106
 Persians, 139, 169
 Philippa, Queen, 14
 Pirates, Turkish, 94 *et seq.*
 Portugal, Joao Antunes, 154
 Prester John, 15, 27-8
 Prize captured, 45

Q

Quiloa, 73

R

Ras Serani, 104
 Rations, 19
 Rivasco, Ruy Lourenco, 49
 Rezende, 130
 Rodriguez, Damiao, 20
 Rustak, 169

S

de Sa, Garcia, 82
 Sagres, 14
San Joao, 75 *et seq.*
Sao Gabriel, 17
Sao Maria, 17
Sao Raphael, 17
 Scurvy, 26
 Sebastian, King, 93
 Seif, 151, 154 *et seq.*
 Sempayo, Laiz de Mello, 168, 170
 Senna, 71
 Sepulveda, Leonora, 77 *et seq.*
 —— Manoel de Sousa, 77 *et seq.*
 Silveira, Gonzalo de, 72
 Sines, 16, 46
 Siu, 133, 135, 152, 168

Slave-markets, 15
 Slave-trade, 114-115
 Soarez, 61
 Socotra, 59
 Sodre, Dona Isabel, 16
 Sofalfa, 44, 52, 67, 72
 Sultan, Imam, 140 *et seq.*

W

Wa-nyika, 155
 Wasegeja, 98
 Witchcraft, 65, 110-11, 163

T

Tanga, 127
 Tangier, 148
 de Trasto, John, 14
 Turkish pirates, 94 *et seq.*

Y

Yaa'rub, 167
 Yabrin, 151
 Yemen, the, 131 *et seq.*
 Yussuf-bin-Hasan, 106, 116

U

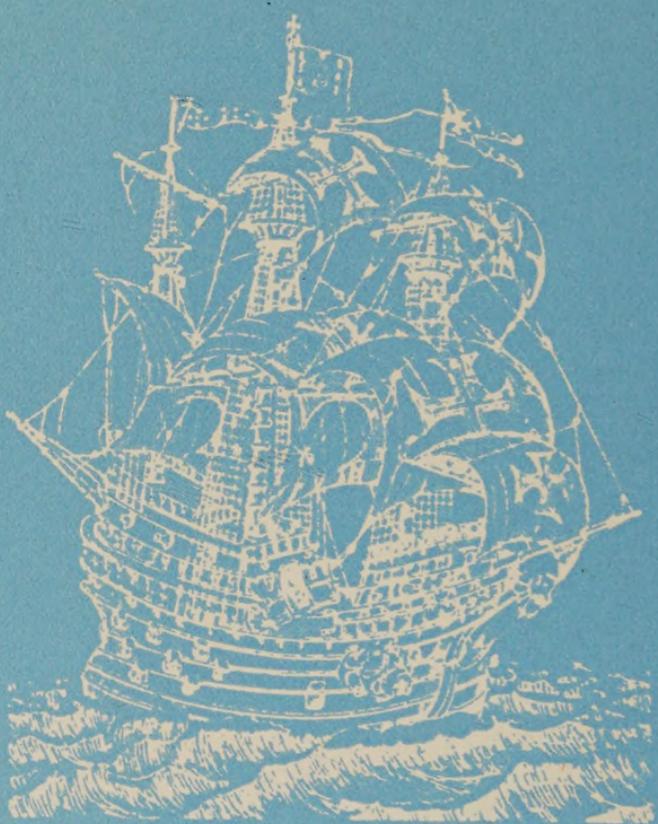
Uja, 56

Z

V

Venice, 17

Zacut, 19
 Zambesi, 62, 71
 Zanzibar, 40, 48, 50, 100-1, 143-6,
 153, 163, 166, 168
 Zimba, 95 *et seq.*



*A Fearless, Taunting
Challenge to Mass Opinion*

**CINDERELLA
OF
EUROPE**

SPAIN EXPLAINED

**SHEILA M. O'CALLAGHAN
M.A.**

A brilliant exposition showing every phase of Spanish life and the Spaniard under the Franco regime, revealing the almost universal misrepresentation by the Democracies and their determination to foist their own form of Government on Spain, whose Government is applying the principles of Christianity to the political sphere.

Demy 8vo Illustrated 12/6 net

**SKEFFINGTON & SON LIMITED
11 Stratford Place, W.I**



Quiloa

Mozambique

Gardens